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# STEPS TOWARD ORGANIC CHURCH UNITY IN PROTESTANTISM IN THE U ITED STATES DURING THE PERIOD 1900-1930

by

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# STEPS TOWARD ORGANIC CHURCH UNITY IN PROTESTANTISM IN THE UNITED STATES DURING THE PERIOD 1900-1930

## CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### A. An Historical Survey

As we scan the glowing pages of church history, and note carefully, in each century, the ecclesiastical organizations that have attempted to further the mission of Christianity in the world, we are struck forcibly by the great success that has attended their efforts, and the apparent extent to which the Gospel has been taught, and the Christian message of faith and work has been propogated. Fired to renewed vigor, that little group of disciples, inspired b y the conviction of a risen Master, virtually began the transformation of the world. For a century and a half, the numbers of the faithful body of Christians grew, until harassed by their enemies, forced to apologetics by other religions, and outlawed by the Imperial government of Rome, there grew up a gradual consciousness of unity and catholicity, which culminated in the building of an ecclesiastical body, with a body of tradition and scriptures, with rules of faith, and a definite clerical heirarchy who spoke with authority because of the sanction they received from the apostolic tradition.

A unity which was intrinsically spiritual, and not based on forms and dogmas, at first, pervaded the whole system, and with a definite common goal at the center of their endeavor, the Catholic Church began its steady march into the future. But soon, instead of using the institution of the church as a servant, it became the master, and men inside the church began to feel uneasy in their uniformity of thinking and conduct, and began to rebel against it. Men's minds could no longer be cast in the mold of a definite rule of faith and an ecclesiastical system, and the leaders of the church began to match their wits in theological debate.

Gnosticism with its emphasis upon legalism and salvation through knowledge, brought about the first definite schism in the early Christian Church. It was very insidious in its attack upon the main body of Christianity and the conflict raged for centuries. But the chief instance of a schismatic church or denomination, "was the Donatist Church of North Africa, which was in existence from 311 until the mohammedan conquest. This schism is particularly interesting because by some of the Roman Church, the Established Church of England, has been called the Donatist Church of modern times."[1]

The second great split occurred when East met West in the council chamber, and the former accused the latter of

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1. Slosser, 'Christian Unity , p. 20.

heresy because they adopted the"filioque" clause in the Nicene Creed. The division became permanent when Pope Leo IX of the western church, sent an excommunication of the Patriarch of Constantinople, by the Papal Chancellor and deposited it on the altar of St. Sophia.

Thus unity was sacrificed on the altar of stubborn insistence upon a mere word in a theological dogma. Men of that day would fight for their convictions, even though that concerned only one word in a creed, and the desire for liberty and freedom of thought began to express itself. Regarded by the demands of that day, apparently those convictions meant life or death for the church, and yet, viewed by the telescope of historical Christianity, this willingness to separate upon a difference of opinion has reproduced itself in succeeding centuries in the Protestant tradition and has meant continuous separations and endless quibbling over non-essentials, and the fostering of a spirit of antipathy between various bodies each of whom considered its conviction to be dictated by the will of God. And we wonder if many of the blots on the escutcheon of the church could not have been soon erased had those warring sections tried to understand that unity with liberty was the Christian ideal, not gained "by compromising for the sake of peace, but by comprehending for the sake of truth."[1]

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1. O. Sperry, Signs of these Times, p. 137.

Now followed various movements within the church for reform, and the stubborn refusal of the church to be reformed by peaceful means. We pass thru the period of the Lay Brotherhood movements, down to what is known in the annals of Christian history as the Protestant Reformation, but which really was a Revolution involving schism. The new movement in the church was coincident with the passing of feudalism; with the rise of independent cities with states; and with the supplanting of Scholasticism by the Renaissance or new Learning. The invention of printing aided in the education of the masses, and vast voyages with important discoveries opened up new realms of thought. Christendom inevitably began to burst from the old shells of the Middle Ages. "A Teutonic materialism, coupled with the progress of truth, of evangelical fervour, and of Christian morality, could result in nothing short of a breaking up of the lifeless unity of a church that had been betrayed into the immoral peace of a spiritually dead body."[1] Leaders began to arise, such as John Huss, John Calvin, John Knox, and Martin Luther, and with a battle cry of freedom, exultantly moved out into a new schism, Protestantism. Thus occurred the third great separation in the church, this time between the North and South, or between Rome and the Teutonic Races. Thus divisions

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1. Slosser, 'Christian Unity', p/ 29.

were necessary to resurrect the spirit of Christ once again, and to apprehend and finally realize the larger and more complete truth.

Yet the roots of this movement drew their strength from the soil of the past. "The Protestant tradition to which we belong was for many centuries predominantly individualistic. The roots of the Reformation are to be found in the lay brotherhood movement of the 14th and 16th centuries. These movements were not only a protest against the abuses of the Papacy and the great orders, but they represent a conviction that salvation of his own soul is man's personal concern, not to be delegated to an institution or a priesthood."[1] This was a great step in throwing off the shackles that had bound individuals' minds, within the Church, but yet, following that primal desire of human nature, security, the Reformers made the great mistake of placing on the keystone of their arch of faith, an infallible Book, when already they had split the church, in their rebellion against the dogmas of an infallible church and episcopate. Thus they declared the right of each individual, as an interpreter, and paved the way for sects and denominationalism.

"The Reformation is the dividing line between the medieval and the modern."[2] As in the medieval period, organized Christianity had been characterized by uniformity without

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1. Sperry, 'Signs of these Times', p. 73.
2. Dr. George Croft Cell.

liberty, so in the modern centuries, since Luther, it has been characterized by extreme liberty without any intimation of unity. By the mere fact of its motivating power, individualism, and the character of its constituency as seekers of freedom, Protestantism could not remain a united body. Everyone knew he had the right to express his own opinion, and many took advantage of their privilege, as a justification for a divorce decree from the great family of Protestantism. Some like the Socenians, the rationalists and Unitarians asserted their individualism by removing all authority of dogma, and finally of the scripture, and placed in its stead a newer estimate of the supreme worth of man, and built their faith upon the traditional needs of men since the beginning of Christianity in the first century. Thus gradually, this group came to regard infallible authority in religion, as unnecessary as supernatural grace,"and thus their break with the past became far more complete than the break produced by Protestant Reformation."[1]

"While the Roman Catholic Church was in sole possession of revelation, grace and salvation, heresy with its resulting condemnation and excommunication was too dangerous to be lightly faced, but in the new situation, to pass from one Church to another, or to start a new church of one's own was the easiest thing in the world, for followers were not hard

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1. The Problem of Christian Unity, p. 45.

to find."[1] As a polity for churches, individualism began to appear in England at the close of the 16th century. It crossed the ocean with the Pilgrims, and rooted itself in our shores at the opening of the 17th century. Here in America, "the land of the free and the home of the brave", following the Protestant tradition, sects have sprung up, through theological issues, political views or sectional interests.

B. The Present Field.

As an introduction to our study of "Steps toward Church Unity", we have tried to give a brief and yet adequate historical sketch of the various movements toward disunity, with their underlying causes which may be summed up in the phrase "search for freedom". The United States is the home of sectarianism, and is a fruitful field of study with its 213 separate denominations[2], advertizing themselves by their various labels, appearing in the great daily papers with all the pride of a bargain sale, and as Peter Ainslie remarks, "each group hoping to get converts from the others or from the religiously disposed of the community who are unidentified with the churches."[3]

In a city of 40,000, reported by Peter Ainslie, the following churches listed themselves in the daily paper, and appeared in this order: "Church of Truth", "First Swedish

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1. "The Problem of Christian Unity", address by Dr. McGiffert (Title: Causes leading up to disunity), p. 43.
2. Review of Reviews, July 1929. "When the Churches Unite". p.72.
3. Ainslie, "The Scandal of Christianity", p. 147.

Lutheran", "First Church of Christ Scientist", "First Congregational", "First Presbyterian", "Grace M.E.","Swedish Mission Church", "Armenian Evangelical, Undenominational", "Nevada Avenue Church of Christ", "Arlington Heights Methodist", "Reorganized Latter Day Saints", "First Methodist Episcopal", "Pilgrim Armenian Congregational", "First English Lutheran", "Westminster Presbyterian", "Immanuel Lutheran", "Memorial Baptist", "First Baptist", "Unitarian Church", "Missionary Church Association", "Theosophical Society", "Bethel Pentecostal Church", "Progressive Spiritualist Mission", "First Spiritualist Church", "Danish Lutheran Church", "Normal Methodist Church", "First Christian Church", "Church of God","St. Paul's Methodist Church", "North Side Christian Church", "Cumberland Presbyterian Church", and "First Armenian Presbyterian Church". And this list is only a mere fraction of the varieties we have in the United States. Here, in the United States we have churches such as the Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist split in two, because of issues arising out of the Civil War. These issues are no practically dead, but thru a rationalization of their position, others have been substituted and the fact is that they remain separated, when by all judgments of economics, society and religion they should be together. Someone has said very trenchantly, "The reason the churches should come together, is that they now are apart."

No discussion of this problem in the United States

would be comprehensive and exhaustive, if some attention were not given to the world-view. There the great body with Catholic tradition is separated from that group of the Protestant lineage. Non-Episcopal and Episcopal churches are distrustful and suspicious of each other and present a spectacle of exclusiveness, that does not represent the Christian message. Surely something is wrong. It must be stated that during the last two decades, not fewer than 18 denominations[1] have completed mergers of one type or other. However, there is much yet to be done, throughout the world, and particularly in the United States.

C. Statement of the Problem.

Now, we shall state our problem. First, we recognize the extent to which the disunity movement has gone since the Protestant Reformation, particularly in the United States. Can that disunity be justified today? Second: There are certain voices both clergy and laity, which rise in approbation against the widespread separation of the churches. What are the reasons for unity? Third, What obstacles stand in the pathway of progress toward church unity? Are they insurmountable? Fourth, What are the modern influences that indirectly promote church cooperation? Fifth, What direct steps have been taken to bring the denominations together? Sixth, What is our

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1. By H. Paul Douglass in "Current History Magazine".

goal? We trust that some of the ground represented by these questions, will be cleared up in this study, and definite conclusions will be reached.

D. Terms Defined.

But before we enter into the main disquisition, we must tarry for a moment to define some terms which will appear throughout the discussion.

From several definitions we have selected the one given by Clarence R. Athearn for "denomination" as "a group of people whose common character is sufficiently marked to enable them to act together in carrying out a practical experiment in Christian living and worship, and sufficiently distinct from such other groups that any surrender of denominational peculiarities or integrity would lower the worth of the experiment."[1]

"Church Unity" is the broad term to be used, and wherever it appears it will signify "any kind of cooperative action which brings the various denominations into closer contact with each other, both visibly and invisibly."

"Church comity" means "a principle of non-interference of common understanding, the opposite of sectarianism, competition, denominational bigotry."[2]

"Church Federation" is defined as "some form of

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1. Athearn, Interchurch Government, p. 110.
2. Calkins, "The Church in the World Today", p. 176.

mutual concordat between the workers of different denominations having for its aim a combination of resources, of activities, and of influence in certain spheres of Christian endeavor."[1]

"Corporate Unity is the opposite of denominationalism, and is the absorption of all separate groups into one great body."

"Organic Unity is the amalgamation of individual sects under one head, in such a way as to promote a complete unity of purpose and of major essentials, while preserving in each, liberty with regard to minor non-essentials."

"Spiritual Unity" means "a unity of the ideals and purposes between individuals and sects, which is invisible, and yet which makes itself visible, by overstepping existing barriers, and promoting a fellowship worthy of the name Christian."

"Christian Unity" should designate " a strong bond of unity between disciples of Jesus that enables them to recognize His claim upon their allegiance as absolutely preeminent."

The careful distinction must be made between unity and union. Unity expresses the idea of oneness of purpose, while union connotes the idea of oneness of organization. Therefore, there can be unity without union, but no union

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1. Christianity: Its Principles and Possibilities. Association Press.

without unity. But whenever the spirit of unity attains to a sufficiently high level to transcend denominational barriers, union of organization is not far in prospect.

Now, we are prepared to begin a comprehensive discussion of the subject, "Steps toward Church Unity", and while we shall deal with the problem generally, particular attention is to be given the Churches of the United States. In our next chapter, we shall proceed to answer the question, "Why Church Unity?".

# CHAPTER II

## WHY CHURCH UNITY?

I. Men have seen the need--

A. Yesterday.

While the Christian church of history has presented this spectacle of division, it must not be thought that every leader was swept into the tide of separation. Stalwart men of yesterday stood up as beacon lights, to guide the milling throngs of the disunited church into a haven of Christian Unity.

When the great schism of the Eastern and Western church seemed to separate permanently these two great branches of 11th century Christendom, in a letter to Henry IV, king of the Romans, Pope Gregory VII announced in 1074 his intention of placing himself at the head of a large army for the purpose of delivering the East from the Infidels, and of bringing back the Eastern churches into the unity of the faith. Finally, however, under Pope Urban II, the Crusaders did make this attempt, but history shows that instead of accomplishing union between the Greek and Latin churches "it resulted in the former being all the more deeply embittered toward the latter."[1]

Then in the 16th century, came the Protestant

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1. Slosser,"Christian Unity", p. 22.

Revolution, with Huss, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox and later John Wesley, leading bodies forth in Christian division, urged on by the conviction that it was the will of God, that they should do so. But there followed protests against such a complete separation, and various councils were held in order that a re-union might be made. Yet, the movement toward Teutonic nationalism, coupled with the progress of evangelical fervour, had gone too far into the spirit of the people, and the breach began to widen.

However, history is replete with appeals and movements for the abolition of denominationalism. After the Thirty Years' war when Catholics and Protestants were slowly discovering that they were permanently rooted in the thought of European life, and that they must find a way to live together, the philosopher Leibnitz was the prophet of his time in seeking to find a way to live together. He and Boussuet, the Catholic Bishop, sought to think together in terms of philosophic adjustments for a religious basis of union, but all doors remained locked.

Calvin sought for Protestant unity, and urged a council for the reunion of Christendom. John Drury urged the establishment of national churches. Dupin urged the unity of episcopates, including the episcopate of Rome.

Hugo Grotius lent his great intellect to the cause of a united church. John Milton wrote about it. Richard Baxter nearly always mentioned it in his sermons.

B. Today.

Likewise today, the leaders in thought and public life , as well as the man of the street, see clearly what Peter Ainslie calls "The Scandal of Christianity". Dr. Raymond Calkins says,"At no point has the Church in our modern world seemed more justly to merit the reproach of the people, than by its continued division and its perpetuation of sectarian and denominational ideas."[1] Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., concludes, "The Church must have a new birth and be reorganized to meet this marvellous opportunity and great human need. This is the right, logical and natural solution of the problem. It must be realized; and the responsibility therefore rests upon each member of the Christian Church."[2] Peter Ainslie asserts definitely "The greatest scandal of Christianity is that Christians have not learned how to behave toward each other."[3] W.E. Orchard makes this condemnatory statement-- "Our modern churches are becoming the most irritating institutions on earth, and they are doing nothing but breeding coteries of most undesirable people, all of them narrow, especially those who boast of their broadmindedness, trained in partiality, drilled to defend a parochial area of religion with a fixed and fanatical adherence to one element of Christianity, and a

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1. Calkins, The Christian Church in the Modern World, p. 167.
2. Quoted in Athearn, Interchurch Government, p. 30.
3. Ainslie, The Scandal of Christianity, p. 1.

bundle of prejudices concerning all the others. Surely the madness of it all is now visible and the hunger of man's religious nature has grown too fierce to be contented with the wholesome dietaries the rival churches provide."[1]

Such deprecatory assertions about any organization would lead us to suspect that not all was well with it. There are reasons within Protestantism, that merit such reproach, and many reasons to be found in the world which the Christian church is endeavoring to serve, which would justify almost any move to bring the competing bodies of Christendom together, in order that they might more efficiently meet the obvious needs of the world.

II. A separated Church is an anachronism.

A. In the modern world of unity.

1. Political unity against church disunity.

Dr. Raymond Calkins says, "A highly disorganized church is an anachronism in a highly organized world."[2] Everywhere we may look the modern world is trying to meet modern demands, by cooperation, fellowship, unity movements and mergers, in order to defend itself and at the same time to serve better those who call at its door for help. This is true in the political relationships of state to state, and of nation to nation. The political democracy which seems to

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1. Orchard, The Outlook of Religion, p.265.
2. Calkins, The Christian Church in the Modern World, p. 166.

be the modern pattern after which negotiations are carried on between political bodies, should be a worthy ideal for the various church bodies, but whereas nations have come to see that they must agree or perish, the churches take no heed and nurse disruptions; the nations understand that separation is a law of death, but "the church's existence is contrary to the laws of life, and therefore it conforms to the laws of death."[1] In pure organization, the churches are not yet, comparatively in the period of the thirteen colonies, when the United States of America was formed a century and a half ago. Had any one of the colonies, Virginia or Massachusetts, for instance, objected to citizens of adjoining colonies coming into the territory and sharing their privileges, without first becoming citizens of their territory, it would have disrupted all ideas of the American republic. Therefore, the thirteen colonies were further along in real political liberty 150 years ago than denominations are today in Christianity. The methods of the "denominations are still tyrannical"[2] and their exclusiveness is autocratic.

"One of the early Church Fathers once said, in trenchant Latin phrase, that the polity of the church is always modeled after the form of government of the State. Comparing therefore the political progress of the State

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1. Ainslie, The Scandal of Christianity, p. 12.
2. Ibid., p. 51.

with that which has been made in church organization, several facts are clear. First, there are several denominations today patterned after the monarchical or imperialistic forms of government. Second, those denominations which are most democratic in their local forms have not advanced beyond the 18th century in their methods of national representation. Most of the congregationally governed bodies were organized about the time of the American Revolution, and their church government has not advanced much since then. Third, denominational organizations are about in the period that the colonial states were at the time of the Articles of Confederation (1781-1789), the critical period of American government. The Federation of Churches in America is more analagous to the United States Chamber of Commerce, or to the National Association of Manufacturers, than to the House of Representatives of our National Congress. Fourth, a reform is needed. A form of interdenominational comity is needed, founded not on the imperialistic theory that one denomination is to absorb all the rest, but upon the association theory, which will give as much power to the central authority as the U.S. Government has, and yet preserve the right of self-determination of small communities and smaller denominations."[1] Denominationalism is behind the times.

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1. Athearn , Interchurch Government, p. 41.

2. Business, social and educational unity.

No longer in business do forward looking men depend upon the slogan "competition is the life of trade" to advance their work. They know well that money is wasted, time is thrown away, and sensible service to the customer is greatly sacrificed by needless separation, and competition. In society the races know well the prejudices that have grown up as barriers between the cooperation of each for the good of all, and that their present move toward better understanding and a new social evaluation has paid greatly in decreasing the friction and aggressive conflict between the groups. Consolidation, unit methods of cooperation and a better transition between the several stages of the educational system are now being stressed. The little red school house is being vacated, because in a larger organization the student may be served by teachers with higher training, with less aggregate outlay, than in the small unity system, and with greater benefits to all concerned. Radio, airplane and newspaper promote a spirit of brotherhood among the heretofore wrangling sections of society. Everywhere, while before there was discord, we now find unity and the will to fellowship together, except in the church of God, where of all places "the cardinal doctrines growing directly out of experience, such as the Fatherhood of God, the Redemptive personality of Christ, the guidance

of the Spirit and the Life Immortal",[1] might be bonds of union with an attractive power, not to be challenged by any other organization. It is clear that when men in every other activity are steadily moving toward closer cooperation, "an obsolete sectarianism no longer expresses the real religion of our time, which, so far as it reveals itself, is more a practical mysticism than a system of dogma."[2] Our social, civic, political, and business life is surely not so distinct from our religious life, that only in the church does it seem impossible for us to desire and work for fellowship to reach the mutual goal of a better life for the individual and a more closely related society in which to live. But in the church, as in no other organization, has the constituency failed to catch the spirit of the age. No longer can the church afford to stand divided, because our grandfathers willed it, for they were men of faith who created denominations as a response to the needs of their day, and "if our faith were as robust as theirs, we would follow our convictions and build a more inclusive organization of the Christian Church",[3] as an answer to the needs of the present hour. A highly democratized church, is the only hope for Christianity in a civilization which demands democracy, because it best

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1. Prof. Buckham, "Religion as Experience", p. 126.
2. Article by Stanley Stuber in the Christian Century, March 19,1930:"Church Disarmament Conference Makes Slow Progress."
3. John R. Scotford in Christian Century, March 19, 1930: "Denominationalism's Debt to Grandma".

fulfills the requirements of the modern day. The whole problem is whether Protestant Christianity will have as much collective intelligence in adapting to the world around it, as the British Empire, the Standard Oil Company and the Catholic Church have had.

III. Unity is a necessity.

A. To fight against organized immorality.

"Unity would give us a working basis from which to attack the iniquities that have agreed while churchmen have wrangled."[1] So speaks Dr. Cadman. American youth must be defended from the powerful forces of organized immorality and irreligion which are attacking and rapidly destroying its Christian character. Only a united church, either in spirit or organization, can possibly meet this challenge. "Half of Christendom is not on speaking terms with the other half, and yet every organization of immorality, looks upon every other, as a friend and a welcome ally, in carrying out a united program."[2] A church "divided against itself cannot stand", nor "put to flight the armies of night."[3] Only a united church can possibly hope to defend youth from its modern unity of enemies, immoral movies, the jazz age, a body of literature promoting sensuousness, and a materialistic philosophy which is very enticing.

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1. Cadman in 'The Problem of Christian Unity', p. 7.
2. Ainslie, The Scandal of Christianity, p. 3.
3. Athearn, "Interchurch Government", p. 5.

The churches have become so particularistic and clannish that they strain over the gnat of formal religion and swallow the camel of jealousy, distrust and immorality in general. "Denominationalism is directly responsible for immorality in the community. Too weak to exert any influence alone, and too jealous to act together, the churches do not command the respect of the community and are unable to stem the tide of prevailing evil. The feeble efforts at consolidation have failed because of a few bigoted sectarians."[1] Catholic social service, missionary and political campaigns have the power of a united church behind them, but Protestant programs of religious education, and programs to combat the forces of evil in general have lost much of their power, because of divisions and emphasis upon a body of dogma, that has long since been dead. With organized vice flourishing in every city in the country, the divided church should hide its face in shame, at the puerile weakness it evidences in dealing with these problems. To combat a united foe, armed to the teeth, the church must marshal her united forces, under one banner, and remember that now, what Professor L.P. Jacks says is a fair statement, "Between the Church and the world all ethical contrast is abolished; both in guilt and innocence they are one. If the world is bankrupt the Church cannot be solvent, but shares with the world in the general ruin,

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1. William Boyle, "Transplanted Denominationalism", in The Outlook, vol. 23, p. 323.

both as to guilt of its cause and the unending mischief of its effects." There is no alternative; the church must organize, unite its forces, and recast its own ethical ideals.

B. To promote peace more effectively.

A divided church cannot prevent war, because its present organization is the incarnation of the war spirit. Professor Ellwood says, in this respect, "First of all the Church must become united within itself. It cannot preach a gospel of reconciliation successfully unless it can illustrate that doctrine in its own life. It cannot reunite a divided world as long as it remains divided and warring within itself." Neither can it promote peace, because its members are not at peace with each other. "Every denominational name is the label of a quarrel,"[1] which in many cases is perpetuated, when it cries to the world "Peace, Peace!", when there is little united effort toward fellowship within its own borders.

The world war made clear that the denominational church had lost its way, for very few in a united voice rose against it. The tragedy of this is shown in what Bishop McConnell says on this point. "The abrupt plunge into the world catastrophe revealed to Protestantism the appalling fact that she had no voice through which she

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1. Ainslie, op. cit., p.12.

could speak a single word authoritatively at a time of world crisis. Lord Grey reported that forty-eight hours more of discussion would have forestalled the crisis. How would it have been possible for Protestantism to say or do anything in forty-eight hours? Who would have spoken? Who can speak for Protestantism? The war will leave behind it a host of world-wide perplexities which a world-wide Church ought to help relieve. In any event the present plight of the Churches cannot long endure."[1] Heretofore a divided Protestantism has presented a spectacle of puerile weakness in dealing with the forces of jingoism and economic imperialism which cause war. The tragedy of the church is its timidity. There was a world war which threatened to throw the world into the ashcan, and the Church must bear the burden of proof for her position, because the roots of that war, as we well know today, extended into the long years that preceded it. It is because the church lacked a united vision, and therefore could not and would not disseminate its message of "Peace on earth, good will to men" in to the outside world, that the seeds of hatred found fertile soil in the natures of men, and sprang up in full flower as a devastating war, which involved the whole world.

The church did not prevent the last war, but "it

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1. Quoted in Athearn, "Interchurch Government", p. 31.

ought to develop the ability to prevent the next one."[1] It should effect a self-cure for its former incompetency, to influence public opinion in this matter of war, which shall determine the destinies of the nations. General Tasker Bliss has said,"If the churches cannot agree to do this, it will not be done. Nor will it be done until the good God puts into them the proper spirit of their religion. The responsibility is entirely upon the professing Christians of the United States. If another war like the last one should come, they will be responsible for every drop of blood that will be shed, and for every dollar wastefully expended." A burning challenge such as this from a man who knows both the atrocities of war and the duty of the church, cannot be met adequately, except by a united Christianity, which is determined to scrap its petty differences in order that world peace may be gained.

C. To convince those outside the church

1. Of its sincerity.

The church has not practiced what it has preached from its pulpits. The result is that the "church is an institution which appears like some of her ministers, as a moral power giving pious advice to parishioners whose civic quality and community democracy already transcend that found in

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1. Calkins, The Christian Church in the Modern World, p. 157.

the organization of the church itself."[1] She asks others to be saved, who herself has not been saved. And the man of the street sees this. "Wise men of strong faith and no faith", observes the Atlanta "Constitution", "are agreed in believing that the most powerful persuasion, that Christianity could offer to non-Christians, agnostics, and atheists would be the Protestant body, chanting "we are not divided, all one body we."[2] When a divided church speaks to industry and capital concerning their strife, and offers economic amelioration through the application of the ideals of Jesus, they answer boldly, "When we see the score of churches in the community joining in effective cooperative action, thinking not of building up their own organization but of most fully serving the community, then your word will come to us with power and not till then." How can a world take the admonitions of a warring body seriously, when it talks of peace, or how can industry be influenced greatly by a competitive Christianity, or how can a church try to Christianize a state, while she herself is not democratized? For the church to try to teach brotherhood without achieving brotherhood is ineffectual and the purest kind of Pharisaism. To save her influence in the world, the church has no alternative - she must unite.

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1. Athearn,"Interchurch Government", p. 130.
2. Literary Digest, June 22, 1929. Article: "The Sweep toward Religious Unity."

D. To eliminate waste of resources.

"It has been asserted that if only the church were one at home and abroad, we have now at our disposal all the resources in men and money required to evangelize the world in one generation."[1] Thus spoke the Bishop of Dornakal at the Lausanne Conference, and although the estimate is put rather too strongly, it will be generally admitted, that with the present system of organization in the church, much time, many dollars, and men are either wasted, or not put to their best use. The problem today is not what we shall do for the church, but what we shall do with what we have. The hard-headed layman is backing church unity for practical and economic reasons. We may quote Leighton Parks here: "At any rate it is the economic waste in the churches which has attracted the attention of some good men who, knowing that elimination of waste has been a source of wealth in business, are shocked by the extravagance which is so characteristic of the churches. 'Why,' say these men, 'cannot the churches get together and pool their assets and liabilities.'"[2]

Of course, this must be considered only as a very small motive in church unity, for any union effected on purely economic foundations cannot carry out its purpose, or fully realize the end for which the movement began. But Roger

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1. Report of Lausanne Conference, p. 492.
2. Parks, "Crisis of the Churches", p. 47.

Babson says that the future of the church depends largely upon how she applies her material as well as spiritual means, to the crying need of the world for satisfaction in things that she alone can give.[1] Pooling of resources, and a more sensible location of churches, are merely means toward a more effective service in Christianizing the world. But it must be admitted that much economic waste is now present in our ecclesiastical system which might be eliminated.

Church unity would greatly reduce the present evil of overchurched areas. "The needless multiplicity of churches means half-filled pews, half-hearted enthusiasm, a generally dreary and depressing atmosphere, in which it is difficult to cultivate an eager spirituality, it means division of forces, impaired prestige, diminished power to fight for right against wrong!"[2] But actual figures and statistical estimates show best what church cooperation might do, in eliminating a leaky financial system.

"In Gill and Pinchot's study of the country churches of Ohio, we have the most complete study at present available of the lamentable condition to which this lack of foresight can reduce the church. In the entire State there was in 1918 an average of one church for every two hundred

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1. Babson, "The Future of the Churches."
2. Literary Digest, June 22, 1929. Article: "The Sweep toward Religious Unity."

and eighty people. Out of every hundred of these churches, sixty had fewer than 100 members: fifty-five fewer than 75, and thirty-seven not more than 50 members. Two thirds of the churches, even counting in all the town churches, had no resident pastor, while in the open country only three hundred and sixty, or thirteen per cent of the two thousand eight hundred and seven churches, had resident pastors.In the denomination with the largest number of country churches the average salary paid was $857 and free use of a parsonage; in the denomination with the next largest number, $787 or $680 if parsonage was provided."[1] A system which allows such conditions to exist is doing justice neither to itself, nor to its ministry, nor to the people it serves. No wonder the church cannot grapple with the social problem in the cities when it is divided into such small groups! Half the number of churches with twice the number of members, would do more than twice as effective work. The fact is that at present there is no solution to the economic problem of Protestantism except by a move toward consolidation. If the Protestant body of Christianity follows her present path, there is peril in her future. With a decreasing membership each year in some of the largest bodies,[2] and with a needless extravagance not to be tolerated in a forward looking church, in a few years,

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1. Brown,"The Church in America", pp. 197-198.
2. See report in Federal Council Yearbook, 1930.

what Father Vaughan of Montreal has predicted may be the destiny of Protestantism: "From what I hear of conditions in the United States, the Catholics will soon control that country through force of numbers. Christian fecundity is fighting sterile paganism, and the battle for possession of the world will soon be narrowed to the Catholic Church and the destructive forces of agnosticism. Protestantism is disappearing."[1] If Protestantism ever does reach that fate, one of the prime factors in its downfall, will be its negligence in sensible church location and the stubborn competition between denominations within its fold. A modern age demands a united Church for economic reasons.

E. To represent the mind of Christ.

When all other reasons for church unity are thrown to the winds, this should be the impelling force to bring about complete reunion, organic or spiritual. When a new church came into a particular district of China to do missionary work, a Chinaman asked a very significant question, "What! Some New-Fashion Jesus Christ?" Surely, an impression such as this, would not be made by an organization which truly represented the mind of Christ.

Bishop McConnell declares, very observingly, "That the Lord Jesus would aim at diversity of Christian experience

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1. Quoted in Parks, "The Crisis of the Churches", p. 124.

and practice we all believe - that he would approve of diversity's preventing a substantial union here and now into one fold we can never believe. The substantial union would enrich any diversity worthy to be called Christian."[1] What kind of unity Christ would prefer, we cannot dogmatically assert, but we are assured by His desire that His followers should be one, even as He and the Father are one, that he would more truly be represented in the world by a church with more spiritual unity than now obtains there. A Christian church should not be broken up into belligerent factions, each claiming to have a monopoly on the spirit of the Master, and denying that claim to any other body. It is the Christian spirit that identifies any group with the true church. Any exclusive attitude or denominational pride just so much breaks down that unity, and is the opposite of that mind which prayed "that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they all may be one in us." This may not mean corporate unity, but we may feel assured that any factor which hinders the reorganization of the church on the basis of spiritual unity, is a practical denial of the Christian spirit and Christian ethics.

However, the progress of church unity will of necessity be slow. As we have seen, the modern world presents many reasons why some form of closer cooperation between denominations is demanded. Yet, the steps must be slowly

1. McConnell - Living Together, p.35

and carefully taken, for there are rocks in the way which must be pushed from the path, and in the next chapter we are to examine closely these obstacles in our path.

# CHAPTER III.

## OBSTACLES TO PROGRESS

We are now at the center of our problem. Many churches today, recognizing that there is an insistent demand for some form of unity, are praying for and looking, sometimes longingly, sometimes doubtingly, sometimes hesitatingly, toward the inevitability of Protestant re-union. This is a healthy and propitious attitude, and yet no one should allow himself to become over-optimistic at the future of the church of God. Denominationalism has had an air of respectability in the past, that now may hide a multitude of sins. Now, members of the sects have taken up the magic phrase "Church Unity", and have done little to recognize their own contribution to that vast number of visible and subtle barriers to the goal which they have so hurriedly considered as possible of attainment without much effort. No denomination can afford to become sentimental over this momentous issue, and begin immediately to call a rival sect by pretty names in a church unity conference, with any sincerity, until it has scrutinized itself carefully, and purged itself of some of its unbrotherly and unchristian attitudes, such as pride, exclusiveness, intolerance, selfishness and self-satisfaction, all of which are

the antithesis of spiritual unity, and a direct obstacle in the pathway of the moving Christian Church. These attitudes may become incarnate in a creed, a measure of polity, a denominational paper, or in the ministry itself. It is very easy in this modern age to see the faults and even much to be commended in others, yet until we recognize the faults within our own organization, church unity is only a dream.

As the ship of state found shoals ahead, before it finally reached its haven in the United States of America, so the church, as it moves from various directions into the great highway of unity, will find obstacles, some of them surprisingly large, in every by-path. We must not forget, however, that these real impediments are modern, and that many of the causes of disunity in centuries past, are now forgotten, but remain embalmed in history, and in denominational tags, to be revived at a moment's notice. There are few denominations today whose original cause for being is an important factor in keeping them apart from the great body of Christianity.

So we must deal frankly with what seem to be,now, the most challenging obstacles to progress in the future, in order that we may proceed with our next step.

I. Lack of definition.

A. Of what we want.

What do we really mean when we say we want "church unity"? Progress has been retarded because those seeking unity had no definite conception of what they were aiming at. Nothing has yet been done, which satisfied enough people, so that the denominations could point to the experiment in a definite form, and say, "That is what we want." Church unity if it is to be more effective than the old separatist system, must be practical, and no two church unity conferences have yet agreed upon which form of church unity would be the most practical. And there can be no concerted and enthusiastic movement toward a goal until each man knows where the goal lies, and considers it worth his honest effort to reach it.

Very few denominations really want corporate unity, which would involve their giving up some of the traditions distinctive to their particular group. They will not admit that the things their fathers fought for and won are invalidated by a modern age. They rebel against the idea that one denomination might swallow up the others, preserving its own traditions, and causing others to sacrifice. "Any forced union of churches, based on the surrender of distinctive principles is foredoomed to failure."[1] This statement by Dr. Calkins expresses his opinion that this would be a return to Roman Catholicism.

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1. Calkins, Christian Church in Modern World, p. 67.

Then there is another group which states that organic unity, which does not imply elimination but comprehension, is the ideal. Yet, not all are agreed that a diversity is possible in a visible organic unity. They suspect that their personal interpretation of the truth, and their individual expression of it, would be limited in such a unity. And if this type of unity involves no more than a unity of purpose, without a oneness in organization, some retort that we already have that in church federations is always made.

However, a few who see easily this dilemma make the problem easy, by pointing to spiritual unity, as something to work for. Athearn observes,"Unity which Jesus desired was one of purpose, personal devotion to a loving Father, and ethical obedience to a righteous God. He didn't want uniformity, but unity of purpose."[1] Almost anyone would admit this, but they do want more than this, because they realize that some reorganization is necessary and imperative, if the Protestant church is to serve its purpose in a world where power of organization is prerequisite to effective work.

B. Of who shall unite.

"During the last ten years, the leaders of the

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1. Athearn, Interchurch Government, p. 114.

church, like Gaul, have been divided into three parts:

"The first believed that we should seek Reunion with those who are our kith and kin - the Protestant churches which dominate Anglo-Saxon Christendom.

"The second, though willing to confer with all, thought that no effort toward Reunion should be made until the Roman and Eastern Churches were ready to agree on terms.

"The third took no interest in the matter."[1]

Thus, lacking a definitely formulated conception of what the problem really is, there is disagreement in many circles, concerning the plausibility of trying to come to any agreement with Roman Catholicism. Others, on the other hand, would hold up the procession until the Catholic body of Christianity is willing to walk along, hand in hand. Still another representative number feel that those only who have similar traditional backgrounds, such as the congregational system, or the episcopacy, can ever hope to join together successfully. So these various opinions lend confusion to the movement, and not until common definitions are accepted can definite action be taken.

II. Persistence of ideas peculiar to denominations.

A. Concerning ministry and sacraments.

Not only is there a lack of definition but there

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1. The Problem of Christian Unity. Address by Thomas V. Garland, "Steps toward Organic Unity", p. 15.

is an innate love of tradition, which makes the groups unwilling to give up any of their distinctive principles. "To say that this is due solely to unregenerate human nature, or to the ecclesiastical mind so hopelessly recalcitrant, is an easy retort for one on the outside, but it really does not do justice to the religious ideas in question."[1] Each believes that it is a spiritual witness, some force of which would be lost in a united church. This attitude is what has kept denominationalism alive, and will prove an almost insurmountable obstacle in the path of anything like organic unity. "The churches will not agree that they are superfluous as separate entities."[2]

Perhaps, this would be a matter which might be solved by distinguishing between essentials and non-essentials more closely, if it were not for the fact that churches are seeking unity which have almost antagonistic views concerning their ministry and sacraments, and the church. One branch, getting its theory from the catholic tradition, holds that the church is a continuity of institutions, that authority is in the hands of rulers, delegated to those below, and that church is outward and visible entity authenticated by apostolic succession. The other branch, just as tenaciously insists that church continuity is in the faith of the believers, that power is in the hands of the people,

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1. Calkins, Christian Church in the Modern World, p. 182.
2. Review of Reviews, April 1929; "One Barrier to Church Unity", p. 136.

delegated to those above, and that church is an invisible and spiritual order authenticated by perpetual faith. To many the former is unscriptural and an obstruction to the progress of Christianity. Yet, others evaluating the churches which cling to the latter view, admit a burning spiritual glow, but can't see a divinely instituted and authenticated community there. Before any church unity can be anticipated among these contrasted groups, each must mount to a higher truth that includes them both. "Each of the two great Christian types has need to be at once the scholar and teacher of the other."[1] An advanced education in still higher religious values alone can cause the adherents of these two Ideas to coalesce and point the way to their final merging in a truly unified Christian church.

It may be many years before the two representative branches of Christianity get together, but these ideas persist in many denominations in Protestantism, represented by the Episcopal and non-Episcopal churches. Particularly is there difficulty in the question of ordination. "At the Lambeth Conference an appeal was made to non-Episcopal churches - 'We would say that if the authorities of other communions should so desire, we are persuaded that the bishops and clergy of our communion would willingly consent

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1. Calkins, op. cit., p. 190.

to accept from these authorities a form of commission of recognition which would commend our ministry to their congregation. It is our hope that the same motive would lead ministers who have not received it to accept a commission through Episcopal ordination as obtaining for them a ministry throughout the fellowship.' The non-Episcopal clergy answered to this - 'But we have always allowed your ministry to come into our pulpits. We do not suggest that your ministry is not a valid one. But what you are really asking us to do is to declare that our ministry is at least an incomplete ministry, and has never been under the highest blessing of God."[1] As long as any one body feels that ministers of another group are invalidly commissioned to exercise a ministry, a "transitional periodof compromise is necessary,"[2] before they can become brothers in one organization.

B. No distinction between essentials and non-essentials.

Many of the obstacles cannot be justified quite so much as the difference in views concerning ordination, the Sacraments and the church. This is particularly true of some of the ideas persisting in denominations, whose unity would be dictated by all judgments of commonsense, except for the fact that by stubbornly emphasizing non-essentials no agreement can be arrived at. There is a sad lack of

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1. Athearn, op. cit., p. 51.
2. Masterman, Christianity Tomorrow - p. 203.

distinction between essentially important matters of belief, and insignificant practices. This is particularly true in those churches which were divided during the Civil War days, on political grounds, or which hold to one manner of baptism as the only valid instrument, or to a particular system of church government as a justification for present disunity. Bishop Fiske expresses his opinion when he says, "Sect rivalry emphasizes certain doctrines and practices which were never essentials of the faith, and ministers spend their time inculcating teachings, upholding standards of social conduct or defending ecclesiastical judgments which should have been abandoned long ago."[1] The ministers do this because they have not carefully examined their faith, especially the faith they live by, to determine what is fundamental to the advancement of the cause of Christ. They cannot see the forest for the trees. No time has been taken to consider the great points of agreement among the denominations; rather has the time been spent in emphasizing and exaggerating differences. A good suggestion has been given by Dean Sperry when he says, "I suggest that we should all do well to give denominational tenets a vacation of say, ten years, and address ourselves, denominationally to discovering those truths of religion which our hereditary faith and practice ignore. I think we should have better prospect of mature and saintly individuals

1. Fiske, Confessions of a Puzzled Parson, p. 102.

among us."[1] And it might be added that no permanent church unity is possible until the individuals within the groups do have a will to unify or cooperate, with the members of other denominations. No denomination can afford to give up in any kind of cooperative movement, anything of distinctive value to the great body of the church, but if the call ever does come to sacrifice some denominational tenets in the cause of church unity, each group should be ready to weed out the non-essential and discard them on the scrap-heap of ineffective instruments. The only hope is in the vision of each church to see clearly the over-arching faith of Christianity as a whole, which shall transcend their petty differences, and draw them around one banner. "The more devotion to Christ becomes a ruling passion of His church, the less divergences of opinion or of practice will matter."[2] "Unless the centripetal force of common love is stronger than the centrifugal force of racial, temperamental and all other divergences, no reunited church could hope to hold together."[3] These two admonitions should be sufficient to the church in its quest for unity.

III. Denominational propaganda

A. In church history.

Canon Streeter says, "A century ago we were all

1. Sperry, Signs of These Times, p. 99.
2. Masterman, Christianity Tomorrow, p. 410.
3. Ibid., p. 411.

eyes for the errors of every religious body but our own: today we are recognizing the truth in one another's position: but there is one more stage, and that is for each to awaken to the errors in his own views - this is the hardest stage of all."[1] The churches cannot see this great obstacle to unity, because what in comparative religions would be an error is painted in glowing terms as ultimate truth by the writers of denominational church history. Church history carried men thru the two stages of intolerance and tolerance, and at the same time has blinded their eyes to the error of their own position. Denominations are led to believe that what was effective as an instrument in the church of a century ago can be justified today, and that a belief held in the genesis of the denomination, must be held today thru reverence for the denominational fathers. "Emerson said, 'I have no expectation that any man will read history aright, who thinks that what was done in a remote age, by men and women whose names have resounded far, has any deeper sense, than what he is doing today.'"[2] And church history is included.

Usually the interpretations of denominational writers have propaganda as their purpose. Facts are overcolored and arranged so as never to cast a reflection on his religious group. Hardly ever does he tell facts

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1. Quoted in Ainslie, Scandal of Christianity, p. 110.
2. From Emerson's Essays. Quoted by Ainslie, ibid., p. 83.

regarding the purpose and doctrinal position of another denomination, as they would narrate it. "Denominationalism breeds intellectual dishonesty and truth is usually at a discount when one denomination crashes with another."[1] Denominations are usually sensitive regarding their histories, and each one usually shows denominational pride whether it went from another of its own accord or was kicked out. The denominational histories of the Christian church a branch of the Methodist, regard their founder James O'Kelley who in 1792 withdrew with 30 others from the latter church, because of dissatisfaction with episcopal control under Francis Asbury,as a patron saint, but the Methodist church claims he was expelled and brands him as a scoundrel.[2]

In the writing of church history, authors center their thought around controversy and creeds, and have followed national historians who make their histories center around politicians and wars. "Church history," says Dean Inge, "ought to be a biography of ideals." But church history, as it stands, is far from that. If it has been suggested, even as far back as fifty years ago by Ludwig Molheuboer, a Hollander, that in our drive for peace among nations, nothing could help more than a rewriting of national histories, surely the suggestion that to promote peace in the Christian church, and eliminate denominational

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1. Ainslie, op. cit., p. 89.
2. Data taken from The Christian Century, Nov. 27, 1929, an editorial entitled "Christian Unity Idealism on Bedrock."

wars, nothing could help much more than the rewriting of church history, is not beside the point. "This would mean of course, a disturbing of some denominational heritages, but the various groups must remember that whatever is of primary value has passed into other denominations, and that the things for which they now contend are forms and phrasings, which are of secondary value and upon which those leaders of bygone days would have ultimately changed."[1] Therefore denominational church history is another obstacle to be reckoned with, because it breeds both contempt for others and pride for self, and "the only alternative is to rewrite it", concludes Peter Ainslie.[2]

B. In denominational "voices".

We must admit that the two instruments of propaganda, the denominational college and paper, have had much of the sectarian "edge" taken off during the last decade and a half. But our question here is, "Is their continuity a help or hindrance to the spiritual unity of the churches?" If they foster an attitude which breaks down this spiritual unity, then of course they are obstacles in the path of organic unity.

There is a tendency to call denominational colleges "Christian" and state or privately endowed schools

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1. Ainslie, op. cit., p. 94.
2. Ibid., p. 81.

"secular". Yet this classification is rather unfair, and does not represent the state of affairs in each. Peter Ainslie says, "Some years ago I made a tour across the continent, covering the entire school year, speaking in State, privately endowed, and denominational institutions, - - - - - my conclusions were that state and privately endowed institutions manifested, both in faculties and student bodies, a finer type of religion than the denominational schools."[1] Yet, it is assumed by many that a Christian education can be obtained best in colleges of their denomination.

But, a great many schools, particularly those of the smaller denominations, thru self-defence do foster an exclusive sectarianism, which is an enemy of progress toward church unity. Whether these schools should remove their denominational labels, or whether they should become largely interdenominational as many are, or admit on their boards of trustees men from other groups, it is not fair to say, because that is a problem of method - our purpose here is to point to the denominational school, as one of the obstacles to unity. Much is being done by the progressives to remove it, but more needs to be accomplished in this direction.

Likewise the denominational paper, which in the

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1. Ainslie, op. cit., p. 106.

past has been more controversial and partisan, has become less rigid, but is still a "party" organ. The time has come when the denominational paper should lose its denominational affiliations and come to represent the Christian sentiment of the whole community. Many of the papers do from time to time publish articles by members of other denominations, but until each one is willing to have cooperative action on their editorial staff, trustee boards and among the directors, the papers do provide an obstacle that must be overcome; that of a spirit of competition, of exclusiveness and pride.

IV. Denominational exclusiveness.

A. In the Lord's Supper.

Here, perhaps, is one of the most awkward barriers we will have to strike down. "More than three-fourths of Christendom will not partake of the Lord's Supper with other Christians."[1] This is true primarily because this most fruitful means of unity is virtually placed on a merchandise basis, to be received only by those within the particular group. This is a slap in the face of Christian brotherhood, when we think of the teaching by these same denominations that all Christians are equal before God. If Christians cannot partake of the Lord's Supper together,

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1. Christian Century, Nov. 27, 1929. Editorial: "Christian Unity Idealism on Bedrock."

something is radically wrong. "Our getting together at the Lord's Supper is not dependent upon our knowledge of this or that theory of its observance; it is dependent upon the spirit of our approach."[1] So speaks Peter Ainslie as he tries to present this obstacle and its solution.

Yet this spirit, because of a propensity to Pharisaism, has been very unethical. Even in many of the Conferences upon church unity, brought together during the last five years, there has been demonstrated an attitude which was the denial of the validity of the purpose, for which the conferences were called. "At the Lausanne Conference on Faith and Order in 1927, Dr. William Adams Brown presented a report in which was a very innocent and colorless suggestion that the provision might be made for some sort of intercommunion, in mission lands, and at some future meeting of the conference."[2] Ainslie remarks significantly upon this, "The delegates at once began to recede from the conciliatory approaches that had so amazingly characterized the conference, back into those threadbare traditions of denominational isolation and superiority."[3] Bishop Gore, when asked if he would attend the intercommunion service and sit down at the Lord's Supper with other Christian Brethren of other denominations, said, "No; do

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1. Ainslie, op. cit., p. 54.
2. Christian Century, Dec. 4, 1929. Article by William E. Barton, "Lausanne's Blind Alley."
3. Ainslie, op. cit., p. 58.

you think I would violate the laws of my church?" Here we see the element of imagined denominational superiority in evidence. "This exclusive privilege policy,"[1] which is a form of tyranny, raises the question whether Christ and his religion are practical factors in the affairs of a discordant world.

Bishop Manning of the Episcopal Church would not approve Dr. Henry Sloan Coffin's administering the sacrament in the Episcopal Church at the meeting of the New York Conference of the Christian Unity League. The Churchman, the official voice of the Protestant Episcopal Church, had this comment to make, "Bishop Manning has used laws which are open to different interpretations to enforce a partizan position; he has not represented the comprehensiveness of the Episcopal Church. And in enforcing a partizan position, which he as an individual is entitled to hold, he has as a Bishop done an irreparable injury to the cause of Christian unity."[2] The Christian Century, an inter-denominational paper, added these words: "This was an unbrotherly act, an unchristian act, and was schismatic and divisive. It violated a fundamental law of Christian Unity, and was a flagrant illustration of what our denominational system means."[3]

We see that the exclusive privilege policy is now

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1. Ainslie, op. cit., p. 51.
2. Literary Digest, June 8, 1929. Article:"Against Church Union", p. 28.
3. Christian Century, Nov. 27, 1929. Editorial: "Christian Unity Idealism on Bedrock", p. 462.

being interpreted broadly, by many of the members of these denominations, and in fact the year 1928 was an eventful one in the move toward Christian fellowship, for intercommunion was observed in Unity Conferences at San Francisco, Baltimore, and Columbus, for the first time by all denominations represented. This was a brave leap in faith, very appropriate in a meeting called to discuss ways and means for Unity, but until this exclusive spirit is removed from every individual in every church, we have a long way to go before we reach Church Unity, either spiritual, which comes first, or organic, which is our ultimate goal.

Thus we have considered the modern obstacles to Church Unity, as frankly and broad-mindedly as possible, and have noted that they represent an exclusive, superiority complex, or an inadequate knowledge of what is involved in the movement. Now we are to review certain steps that have been taken to reduce the number of these obstacles.

# CHAPTER IV

## MOVEMENTS CONTRIBUTING INDIRECTLY TO CHURCH UNITY

Notwithstanding the fact, pointed out in the preceding chapter, perhaps somewhat pessimistically, that the modern religious world is the victim of some influences, which form obstacles to church unity, we are here to look forward with considerable optimism to a realized church unity, because there are so many factors in our world which contribute to the attainment of our goal. Unity characterizes our modern day. The world is becoming one neighborhood. People today have a vast amount of information about each other because of the improved facilities of travel, communion, printing and schools. "Such a thing as a race, nation or denomination living in separation is more and more being accentuated as non-Christian in spirit and programme."[1] And this judgment by Gaius Jackson Slosser is corroborated by the effect of modern science and psychology upon the minds of people. Such psychologists as Professor William James, Professor William MacDougall, Professor G. Stanley Hall, Dr. E.G. Starbuck and many others have caused the varieties of religious and other experience to be better understood by both clergy and laity. True science is bound

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1. Slosser, Christian Unity, p. 142.

to remove all the prejudices and iniquities that have been nourished and sheltered by the supposition and pretence that they were sacred, when really, in the light of the whole truth, they are viciously contrary to the God of truth, morality and love. And not only are people today coming to understand themselves better, but there has arisen, in the twentieth century an earnest desire to impart the best we have in culture, science, and religion to other benighted lands. To do this involves missionary endeavor, and Gaius Jackson Slosser says, "Missions initiated modern unity movements."[1]

We are to study some of the modern movements that have contributed to church unity, particularly in the United States, but will of necessity have to discuss a few of those international conferences which have contributed most to unity in religious circles, throughout the world.

I. Aroused missionary zeal.

A. Foreign missions.

1. Influence.

"The old age of independent and competitive foreign missions work has disappeared," announces Dr. Raymond Calkins.[2] This is true - nowhere in the whole field of Christian fellowship and service have there been larger attainments of

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1. Slosser, Christian Unity, p. 117.
2. Calkins, The Christian Church in the Modern World, p. 172.

the spirit of cooperation and unity or larger embodiments of that spirit in actual endeavor than in the field of foreign missions. The reasons for this are two. First, the magnitude and urgency of the foreign mission task have demanded such use of our forces and our resources as would contribute most to the accomplishment of that undertaking. As the late Bishop of London said to Canon Gairdner, "This undertaking is too colossal for any one branch of Christ's church to think of undertaking alone." In the second place, the needs of the non-Christian people call for what is fundamental and essnetial and primary in our Christian Gospel. Bishop McConnell speaks truth when he says, "In the presence of a task of such sheer magnitude and appalling difficulty any serious cherishing of traditional and divisive group peculiarities indicates an utter obliviousness to what the name Christian means."[1]

Then the mission field may be a visible validation for plans of organic unity at home. Surely that kind of unity is desired abroad, where so much of importance is involved, that will render impossible all rivalry and waste, will render possible cooperation and united action, and will express fundamentally those spiritual values that we are trying to carry to the world. Robert E. Speer remarks upon such a unity, "And until we have a Oneness like that, our gospel

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1. McConnell, Living Together, p. 81.

will never have the fullness of that divine power which our Lord Himself said it would have only when at last His people are arrived at a Unity perfected into One as He and His Father were one."[1]

In fact there have been achievements in actual unity, in the mission field, which have far surpassed anything that we have won as yet in any other area of the church. Dr. Robert Speer says, "I could name scores of union colleges and theological seminaries and hospitals and institutions of every kind. The day has gone by when any separate denomination undertakes any longer to build up alone a great educational institution of higher learning on the mission field. In building a missionary university from two to ten different organizations will often unite. Further, all the medical missionaries in China have gathered together in one medical association, and all the missionaries in educational work gathered in one educational association. All over the world we are actually witnessing the melting together of denominations."[2] Further than this, William Adams Brown asserts, "There is not a single theological seminary in the United States supported jointly by the authorities of different denominations. There are six such institutions in China."[3] Everywhere on the mission

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1. Robert E. Speer, in "The Problem of Christian Unity",p.69.
2. Ibid., p. 75.
3. Brown, The Church in America, p. 52.

field, today, one witnesses the pooling of energy and money , and the spectacle of duplication of effort is rarely found. "Missionary statesmanship has begun to recognize that a denominational church, working in its separate capacities is incompetent to fulfill the mission of Christ to the world."[1] The differences which divide Christians have shrunk into relative insignificance in the face of the needs of a non-Christian civilization.

2. Conferences.

This missionary zeal has made it necessary to provide for some method of cooperation in the mission field, and this has been done to a great degree by International Missionary Conferences, the first of which, in this century, was held in New York City, and was called the Ecumenical Missionary Conference. "In all one hundred fifteen different societies were represented, coming from forty-eight different countries. This was the greatest general missionary conference Protestantism had ever held up to that time. From the standpoint of numbers present and enthusiasm it has never been surpassed."[2]

However, what was perhaps the most significant missionary conference in modern Christendom, namely, the World Missionary Conference, was held in Edinburgh in 1910.

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1. Ainslie, op. cit., p. 191.
2. Slosser, op. cit., p. 253.

All the Christian mission fields of the world were included except South America. By agreement this Conference was not to be demonstrative, but consultative, deliberative, and educational. Through the various commissions that were appointed, the conference saw plainly not only the magnitude of the comity, cooperation, Federation and Unity movements on the mission fields, but also the demand that these movements be continued and extended both in home and foreign fields. But perhaps the greatest contribution this Conference made to the cause of Christian Unity was the appointment of a continuation committee with such men as John R. Mott, Robert E. Speer and J.H. Oldham as leading members. Slosser says, "This has probably been and continues to be, far more influential in shaping the major policies of Christendom than any other single officially constituted ecclesiastical group."[1] This body of leaders, not only fostered a spirit of brotherhood among the missionaries of different denominations in many foreign fields, by promoting national or international conferences, but it launched "The International Review of Missions", the official organ of the International Mission fields, "which serves not only as a reliable source of information as to what is being done in the various mission fields, but also, what is far more important, as a forum for the discussion

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1. Slosser, Christian Unity.

of principles and policies as between the missionaries in the field and those who are supporting them at home."[1]

Perhaps the most famous of this series of missionary conferences, was held at Kikuya, in Africa in 1913. The purpose was to form a federation of missionary societies, and at the close of the conference a union communion service was held in the Church of Scotland Mission, and was administered by Bishop Peel, assisted by Rev. J.E. Houshere an Anglican clergyman. This caused a severe wrench in the former good will of the group. The two presiding Bishops were accused of heresy by the Bishop of Zanzibar, but the charge was not upheld by the Archbishop, who however did betray his true feeling when he pronounced "that there would be no objection to recognized ministers of their own churches preaching in other Federated Churches; that those baptized elsewhere should be admitted to the Anglican Communion Services; but that Anglicans are not to communicate elsewhere on the ground that the three-fold ministry alone is 'regular'. He carefully avoided saying that the other types of ministry were invalid."[2] One of the most significant effects of this controvery, is that between the years 1913 and 1918, the same Bishop of Zanzibar having had time to reconsider his charges at the Kikuya Conference in 1913, was present at Kikuya in 1918, and presented a

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1. Brown, The Church in America, p. 52.
2. Slosser, Christian Unity, p. 260.

proposal for a definitely united Church, one provision of which was that there should be intercommunion between non-Episcopal and Episcopal churches and also an exchange of ministry. This was a great leap of faith and preceded the first successful intercommunion in America by ten years, - at the Baltimore Conference of the Christian Unity League in 1928.

"The third of these great Conferences - The International Missionary Conference at Jerusalem, 1928, opened a new chapter in Christian Understanding, being 'the first meeting ever held,' says Dr. Mott,[1] 'in which the representatives of the older churches and the younger churches met on a fifty-fifty basis: that is, in which the representatives of the churches of Europe, North America and Australasia, which send missionaries, were represented in approximately the same proportion and number as the churches of Asia, Africa and Latin America, which were planted by missionaries.

"This becomes all the more striking when we recall that as recently as the Edinburgh gathering (1910) there were only about a score of Nationals representing indigenous churches in mission lands among a total of over 11200 regular delegates'."[2] These transactions and others like them indicate a rising tide and there is no power that can

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1. John R. Mott, The Christian Union Quarterly.
2. Ainslie, op. cit., p. 193.

turn that tide back.

The tide has been rising in foreign fields, and we must not forget that if we heed the proposals of the Conferences, they will lead us to unity at home, and that by following the methods they employ to transcend their differences, we might be able to attain that measure of cooperation that they already enjoy."We shall find," declares William Adams Brown, "that at almost every point, (our movement), is following a course which has been anticipated in the foreign field."[1] Let us see some of the fruits of this foreign work.

3. Achievements.

"Of union medical and educational institutions in the mission fields there are today, not counting any that have been united by the recent events in China, 46 in China, 18 in India, 16 in Korea, 8 each in Japan and South America, 4 in Africa and lesser numbers in other fields."[2] "Three great union denominational movements are now well started in China: (1) Anglican, which has taken the form of a General Synod for all China, thus bringing together in one national Church organization the churches connected with the Church of England and the American Protestant Episcopal Church. (2) Union of Lutherans in Central China in the form of a general assembly of the Lutheran Churches of China,

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1. Brown, op. cit., p. 53.
2. G.K.A. Bell, "Documents on Christian Unity", pp. 311-320.

whereby almost two-thirds of the communicants connected with Lutheran missions have united in one common church organization. (3) The formation of a General Assembly of Presbyterian churches in China, which together with the Congregational churches promises eventually to result in a United Church of China."[1] The reunion movement noticeable elsewhere in the mission fields is nowhere as strong as in India, where the national Missionary Council has been in existence for about fifteen or sixteen years. This has held meetings and carried on a large amount of work. "It has recently been reorganized and is now known as the National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon. Today India unites in one body some 200,000 Christians who formerly belonged to the Congregational, London Missionary Society, Dutch Reformed, Free Church of Scotland, Established Church of Scotland, and Basel Reformed Missions."[2] These are merely sample illustrations of the cooperation action that is now taking place all over the mission field. Dr. Robert Speer asks this very significant question, "If it is our duty to draw together in the face of these problems that confront us in the foreign missionary field, is there any less duty before the problems that confront us here in America? For where are the problems of the Christian church more urgent

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1. Quoted in Calkins, The Christian Church in the Modern World, p. 124.
2. Ibid., p. 175.

than they are here in America. Every consideration that argues for unity in India or China argues for unity here in America."[1] The foreign mission work has had its effect, and we at home are applying the principles to mission activity, because we are beginning to see that their problem is our problem, and because unity is more economical and more efficient there, it should work here.

B. In home missions.

1. Accomplishments.

The missionary zeal at home has promoted unity, as it has in the foreign field. The churches have come to realize that they have a common task and a common peril to face, and that there is strength in unity. This does not mean that they are yet willing to surrender their denominational traditions or names for the sake of church unity, but that they have seen a task of such gigantic moment, that in their zeal to lend their individual aid, they have transcended their bigotries and petty differences on the home-mission field. This is a practically modern achievement but it is such a notable one that it may properly be appraised as one of the greatest gains to the credit of the modern movement for a united Protestantism. "At the present time for example, the Home Missions Council and the Council of Women for Home Missions in New York represent sixty-three

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1. "The Problem of Christian Unity", p. 79.

Boards of twenty-eight denominations. These councils organize conferences all over the country in which administrators and missionaries meet to share experiences, exchange methods, determine policies, adjust overlapping, and make definite allotments of territory. They plan to do cooperatively, the work done for Indians, negroes, the Immigrants, the Orientals, the Mormons, the migrant groups, and other elements of our diverse population. They make surveys of the great commonwealth of the West and plan a better distribution of Christian forces, reducing the number of churches in some localities and increasing them in others".[1] This cooperative spirit has already accomplished some striking results: "All of the denominations working in Alaska agreed several years ago to allocation of territory; they make readjustments of territory and responsibility as conditions warrant, and they are trying to realize the meaning of the name which their representatives adopted for themselves four years ago, 'The Associated Evangelical Churches of Alaska'."[2] In Montana, Idaho, Western Washington, Northern California, Utah and Colorado, where pioneer conditions in good part still continue, councils exist which practically federate the home mission agencies of those states and have already secured a very large measure

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1. Calkins, op. cit., p. 169.
2. See Annual Report of Home Mission Council 1923, pp. 113, 114.

of efficient cooperation. In Ohio the problems of the decadent country church are receiving joint attention in an effort to discover if county federations will improve matters. In the Hawaiian Islands a desire for closer cooperation is seeking expression. "Denominations do not now, as a rule, begin any new missionary service in the old competitive way by starting in, without reference to what any other denomination is doimg. Now, usually through the medium of the office of the Home Mission Council, inquiry is made as to the place of greatest need and the best method of making a beginning; and the approval and fellowship of those already at work are sought."[1] This brief survey of the scope of the work supervised by the Home Mission Council and the Council of Women for Home Missions in New York shows what really could be accomplished if the churches appreciated what spiritual unity already exists among them. They are kept apart organically by inherited differences, "which are embalmed in memories and embodied in corporate institutions",[2] while they are brought together practically to evangelize the home and foreign mission fields.

Yet the time will come, when denominations, exclusive in their ecclesiastical policy toward each other, who at the same time are cooperating whole-heartedly in the

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1. Calkins, op. cit p. 170
2. George Foot Moore, History of Religions, p. 380.

foreign and home mission fields, will see the utter inconsistency of their position and move more rapidly toward some more definite form of church unity, than now exists.

II. Interdenominational Movements.

A. The Christian organizations.

No study of the cooperative movement would be complete without some account of the voluntary societies through which the Christians of different denominations are working together in non-official but none the less in an effective way which greatly exhilarates the movement toward church unity. These movements are the true expressions of what American Protestantism, underneath the strata of her prejudices, really stands for.

1. The Y.M.C.A.

On June 6th, 1844, George Williams, a worker in a drapery establishment in London formed an association which he named, "The Society for Improving the Spiritual Condition of the Young Men Engaged in the Drapery and Other Trades." "Of the twelve members enrolled that day three were Anglicans, three Baptists, three Congregationalists, and three Methodists."[1] The name was soon changed to "Young Men's Christian Association." In America it had its start when an association was formed in Boston, in December 1857.

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1. Slosser, op. cit., p. 145.

It attained a membership of one thousand two hundred the first year. The sister organization was formed in 1858 in the University of New York. The first student Y.M.C.A. was organized in 1858, at the International Convention of that organization at Louisville, Kentucky.

At first, only active members of churches were admitted into membership, but in 1920 the Association's substituted faith in Jesus Christ for the more formal requirements of Evangelical Church membership. Now, of all the voluntary societies of Protestantism the Associations most nearly parallel the work of the churches. In fact, there is an increased tendency on the part of many to make it their church. Indeed, there are some who see in the Young Men's and Women's Christian Association their ideal of a comprehensive union church in which all denominations might well amalgamate. Says William Adams Brown, "It does for young men and boys who are members what the institutional church tries to do for all the people in its neighborhood. In addition the Association has been led by a natural and entirely legitimate process to do other things which do not concern young men and boys simply, but have to do with the welfare of the community for which it works or the group of people whom it serves. As a result, the line of demarcation between the sphere of the official and voluntary agencies has become increasingly difficult to discern."[1] But there is a

1. Brown, op. cit., p. 244.

danger that with churches divided as they are, the Y.M.C.A. may become a rival, hard to deal with; a rivalry which, if the churches would unite, as their members have done in the Associations, might be transformed into an alliance, with a partition of labor beneficial to both sides. However, young people in these associations will be the men and women of tomorrow, interested in vital Christianity, but out of sympathy with rank sectarianism.

2. American Student Volunteer Movement.

Much of the modern interest in missions and world brotherhood is due to the American Student Volunteer Movement, which began in 1886 at Mount Hermon, Massachusetts, under the leadership of Dwight L. Moody. Gaius Jackson Slosser says, "It has led thousands of college-trained young people of all denominations who have volunteered to go as missionaries, to appreciate cosmopolitan Christian fellowship."[1] It holds quadrennial conferences of both Canada and the United States in which undergraduates are brought into contact with world leaders in the missionary movement, irrespective of denominational affiliations. Such a movement breeds contempt for a proud denominationalism which if carried into the foreign or home mission field would thwart the purpose of these young recruits.

3. World's Christian Endeavor Society.

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1. Slosser, op. cit., p. 146.

This auxiliary of reunion was founded in 1881, by Rev. Francis E. Clark at Portland, Maine. "It is a very important non-denominational and inter-denominational force which literally girdles the globe. In its local, national and international gatherings it brings together for conference and Christian service the young people and their leaders with membership in various denominations. The result is that all who thus share in its broad fellowship tend to be lifted above the 'middle walls of partition', even over and beyond the same."[1]

4. The Salvation Army.

This aid to the progress of Christian Unity, ministers especially to the outcast, and was founded by Rev. William Booth in London's East End in 1865, together with the Volunteers of America. The organization may be called a Christian cooperative society, because it is supported by the contributions given by friends and the church. Its unit is the family; this being true not only of those who are helped, but the workers as well. The barriers of sex are broken down, for men and women work on a basis of equality, side by side. Brown says, "In the Salvation Army we see the Roman Catholic conception of a monastic order joined to the Protestant principle of the family."[2] Then he adds,"It is worth considering whether this method thus followed is not

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1. Slosser, op. cit., p. 146.
2. Brown, op. cit., p. 247.

capable of wider adaptation; whether in ways more democratic, but no less effective, it may not be possible to utilize the immense spiritual resources of America, its womanhood, as well as its manhood, for a constructive, nation-wide work that shall translate the dream of Interchurch World Movement into a reality."[1]

5. The Temperance Associations.

When a great national reform is in its genesis, it is usually the church-going people who nurture the movement. Then as the infant organization gathers momentum, and becomes stronger thru conquest, others flock to its support. This challenge of a great cause, upon the idealism of the churches, has been ever a potent force toward interdenominational cooperation. So it was in 1874 that the several temperance groups then in the United States were focused in the formation of the Women's Christian Temperance Union with Frances Willard as its first national President. Representatives from the Union had an important part in the foundation of the National British Women's Total Abstinence Union. Thus the first distinctly moral and social service organization came into existence. In the movement, all denominational lines have been disregarded in the crusading work that is being done, and it serves now in the time of woman suffrage, as an organ thru which the

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1. Brown, op. cit., p. 247.

women of every denomination may unite their approvals or protests in the formation of public opinion, for the cause of national reform.

But in the American Anti-Saloon League dating back to 1893, we have one of the most noted instances of denominational cooperation in a special kind of Christian service. As the clergy and laity work together in this organization for the elimination of the alcoholic drink evil, the inevitable result is that all who are thus banded together forget divisions of doctrine and polity as they unite against a common foe. Churches find that in seeing those joined with them in a united effort, whom they have considered as extremely sectarian in policy, the bond for actual union of the denominations has been strengthened, and the apparent obstructions have been greatly weakened.

The influence of such movements as these we have briefly noted, upon Church Unity, or organic unity, will bear much emphasis. But, in addition to the fact stated, that they are conducive to further unity, we should not forget that these associations are barometers of the spirit of cooperation that already exists. They are both the indirect causes, and the direct effects of a unity which now is manifesting itself, but which rests on bedrock, and is obscured from the observer, only by the shifting sands of doctrines and petty prejudices.

III. Interdenominational Administrative Bureaus.

That the demands of life outgrow the bounds of traditional denominationalism is nowhere better seen than in the various interdenominational cooperative agencies which have been formed, to meet the demands of a new age. Bishop McConnell in his book Living Together outlines, "three great campaigns which call for the united effort of all the churches, none of them requiring any surrender by the church of any denominational loyalty: the conflict with the forces of physical might, conflict with forces arising from the control of the material goods of this world, the conflict with a public opinion at times the expression of animal and mob instincts."[1] Further he emphasizes the necessity of cooperative effort in religious education, evangelism and missions. The churches have sensed this challenge by the conflicting forces in the modern world, and have met it by forming certain bureaus to carry one specialized work in each field. It will not be necessary to go into a description of each one, here, but to show just how far this cooperative spirit is being cultivated, and bearing visible fruit, a list has been prepared which follows, and corresponds very closely to that report which appears in the Federal Council's "Year Book of the Churches":

1. Bible and Religious Literature.
   American Bible Society
   Bible Class Alliance

1. McConnell, Living Together, p. 81.

Pocket Testament League
Chicago Tract Society
American Tract Society
Family Altar League

2. Education.
   Commission on Christian Education (Federal Council)
   Council of Church Boards of Education
   International Daily Vacation Bible School Association
   General Education Board
   Religious Education Association

3. Federation and Union.
   Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America
   Association for Promotion of Christian Unity
   Christian Unity Foundation
   National Council, Evangelical Free Churches
   World Conference on Faith and Order

4. Missionary.
   Foreign Missions Conference of North America
   Central American Mission
   Federation of Women's Boards of Foreign Missions
   Woman's Union Missionary Society of America
   Home Missions Council
   Council of Women for Home Missions

5. Sabbath Day.
   Lord's Day Alliance of the United States
   New York Sabbath Committee
   Woman's National Sabbath Alliance

6. Social
   American Association of Societies for Organizing Charity
   Boys' Club Federation
   Carnegie Corporation
   Commission on Church and Social Service (Federal Council)
   Neighbor's League of America
   Playground and Recreation Association of America
   Russell Sage Foundation
   Traveller's Aid Society

7. Church School
   International Council of Religious Education
   International Lesson Committee
   American Sunday School Union
   World's Sunday School Association

8. War and Peace.
   - American Red Cross
   - League for National Unity
   - Commission on International Justice and Good Will (Federal Council)
   - World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship

9. General.
   - Church Advertising Department
   - International New Thought Alliance
   - International Reform Bureau
   - National Christian League for the Promotion of Purity[1]

Such an array of practical representations of the unity spirit would almost convince an optimist that church unity in its organic form lay just around the corner. Yet, as we have seen before, the modern world tendency expressing itself in Leagues of Nations, United States Steel Corporations and Chambers of Commerce, finds many obstacles in denominationalism. However, we have tried to show in this chapter that behind outward divisions there is a thread of goodwill and united vision, running thru the various church groups, which binds them all together in answering the urgent calls from the world, and to meet the insidious challenge from the forces of evil, and darkness. This movement toward unity then has been accelerated, by aroused missionary zeal and a better understanding made possible thru advanced education and mutual participation in the auxiliary movements noted here.

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1. This material condensed from Athearn, Interchurch Government, pp. 176ff, and the Report in Year Book of the Churches, Federal Council Publication.

It must be remembered, however, that these factors contribute only indirectly to the kind of unity that is ultimately sought. They are examples of tendencies and influences only. But certain effort has been expended in the direction of visible union and federation of the churches themselves, and it is our purpose in the following chapter to discuss these more direct steps and their actual results.

# CHAPTER V

## DIRECT STEPS TOWARD UNITY IN THE UNITED STATES

### I. International Church Unity Conferences.

#### A. The Trend.

It is against the background that we have set up in the last chapter that we are now to approach the problem of unity in its larger aspects. Leighton Parks says, "There is no question which has been more frequently discussed in ecclesiastical circles during the last fifteen years than that of church unity."[1] Particularly does there seem to be an intense interest in organic unity, which would unite the churches under one great head. Leaders in the church are becoming wearied by the traditional differences that have kept the denominations and great sections of Christendom estranged from each other, and are earnestly seeking some common basis of understanding, of communication and common sympathies and ideals. This intense desire has been evinced in several great conferences that have been called, to determine a basis upon which organic unity might be established. Bishop Brent sees a difference between yesterday and today, when he says: "Too often in the past discussion have been a

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1. Parks, The Crisis of the Churches, p. 68.

matching of wits. Mind has met mind in theological debate. Now heart may meet heart in penitent effort toward a mutual understanding."[1] This is the great distinction between the Councils of early Christianity and the Conferences of today. The former had an atmosphere of logic and debate, while the latter is filled with an air of sympathy and understanding.

There is a general movement, rapidly gathering momentum, which has organic unity as its goal. Three separate phases of this movement may be noted - one which seeks to unite Christendom as a whole, another which desires unity between Episcopal and non-Episcopal churches, and another which has as its goal the union of those bodies within a definite geographical area, such as a nation, which have sufficiently close contacts and ideals which would make union very fruitful. Now it is very appropriate that the Anglican communion, which has much in common with both the Protestant and Catholic tradition, should launch first a definite campaign to reunite either the whole of Christendom or a very great part of it. It is, too, very significant that the first proposals for unity, upon a common doctrinal and political basis, were made by the Episcopal Church of America in its convention of 1896. A petition signed by "a thousand clergy and thirty

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1. Fiske, Confessions of a Puzzled Parson, p. 36.

two Bishops called upon that convention to make a definite proposal for Christian reunion."[1]

B. The Conferences.

1 1. Lambeth, 1888.

The proposal was placed before the Lambeth Conference of 1888, and it was adopted as the famous quadrilateral, which since that time has formed the nucleus of subsequent platforms for a Unified Church. As it was accepted as "the essential basis for the restoration of unity to the body of Christ on earth",[2] the articles are as follows:

a. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing all things necessary to salvation and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.

b. The Apostles' Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol; and the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of Christian faith.

c. The two Sacraments ordered by Christ himself - Baptism and the Supper of the Lord - ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by him.

d. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity

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1. Slosser, Christian Unity, p. 236.
2. Ibid.

of His Church."

This may be regarded as the beginning of the modern movement toward organic and federal union that has produced many definite results in recent years.

2. Lambeth, 1920.

For twenty-five years good and devoted men have sought for some bond of union. And it has been recognized that it is difficult indeed for Episcopal and Congregational churches to reach any common ground concerning their ministry. So admitting this, a Concordat was proposed at the Lambeth Conference in 1920, whereby Episcopal ordination was to be given to Congregational ministers as a practical approach to visible unity. In the famous "Appeal to all Christian People", we see a definite step forward in these words, "We believe that for all, the truly equitable approach to Union is by the way of mutual deference to one another's consciences. To this end we, who send forth the appeal, would say that if the authorities of other Communions should so desire, we are persuaded that terms of union, having been otherwise satisfactorily adjusted, Bishops and clergy of our Communion would willingly accept from these authorities a form of commission or recognition which would commend our ministry to their congregations as having its place in one family life - - - It is our hope that the same motive would lead ministers who have not received it to accept a commission through episcopal

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BESSIE A. RING

Recorder

ordination, as obtaining for them a ministry throughout the whole fellowship. In so acting, no one of us could possibly be taken to repudiate his past ministry."[1] This is the first time that the non-Episcopal churches had ever been given an official statement concerning the status of their ministries in any proposed union. And this was a very conciliatory approach, by a church which has had a reputation for an exclusive policy concerning ordination and the sacraments. Further, the question concerning the type of unity they were anticipating was answered in part by the closing words of the appeal, "We do not ask that any one Communion should consent to be absorbed in another. We do ask that all should unite in a new and great endeavor to recover and to manifest to the world the unity of the Body of Christ for which He prayed." This "appeal" is perhaps the most notable recent contribution of the Church of England to the cause of Christian unity.

3. Lausanne, 1927.

Bishop Charles H. Brent of the American Protestant Episcopal Church has always been an outstanding leader in the unity movement. At Edinburgh in 1910, the Bishop was convinced that in order to have a union of the churches there must be a conference amongst all the representatives who should thereby lead to a greater consensus than had

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1. Report of the Lambeth Conference, 1920, London, pp. 133-136.
2. Calkins, The Christian Church in the Modern World, p.192.

been reached at the Lambeth Conferences, in matters of Faith and Order. The plan was introduced to the American Protestant Episcopal Convention meeting at Cincinnati, Ohio, in the form of a resolution, which was accepted and referred to a committee which reported, "Your committee is of one mind. We believe that the time has now arrived when representatives of the whole family of Christ, led by the Holy Spirit, may be willing to come together for the consideration of questions of Faith and Order."[1] In the course of time deputations were sent to confer with representatives of various communions in many countries. Finally, after 17 years of negotiations, the World Conference on Faith and Order was in session in 1927, at Lausanne. This was the most thorough conference ever to be held. Throughout, "there was no display of bigotry and rancour that was so evident in the expression of denominational differences but a few years before."[2] Lausanne marked a great advance amongst all of the churches in the progress of Christendom towards unity. It was the first effort for centuries to secure Faith and Order, and was a very great accomplishment. The reports accepted were far in advance of what many of the most hopeful had ever dared to expect.[3] Lausanne marked the beginning of a new

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1. Faith and Order, Lausanne, 1927, p. 7.
2. Slosser, Christian Unity.
3. See Reports in Faith and Order, Lausanne, 1927.

era in the progress towards church unity, and Bishop Brent thru his able leadership helped it to take its place among the great spiritual Mizpah's of ecumenical Christendom. And there are signs that the spirit of Lausanne has been caught up by the evangelical churches of the United States, and is leading to further union among several denominations of the same great families, as to faith and polity.

C. The Effect.

Now these conferences have made their impression upon a world which thinks in terms of cooperation. The spirit they have manifested, and the definite overtures they have made, swept the United States and left behinda movement which has gradually pointed to the organic union of several denominations, either in a corporate body or in a federated unity, or in some more inclusive organization than now exists. Yet, we should not be surprised that there is a great diversity of opinion concerning the kind of unity we should work for, in a country where opinions express themselves in the phenomenon called "denominationalism." Not all leaders are convinced that organic union is either possible or desirable. What Clarence Athearn says, "A re-organization of the Church is demanded because the antagonism of the sects is a practical denial of Christian ethics; because sectarianism defeats the moral

effectiveness of the church's mission"[1], is generally admitted, but what particular form that reorganization shall take is a question. We see today, it is true, a general movement toward organic unity, but we must remember that it has been during the last decade only, that the tree of unity planted by the world tendency that we have just discussed, has born fruit, and it has taken at least forty years for the harvest to ripen. We can imagine that at the beginning of our century, when no example of organic unity encouraged those who looked for complete union, they began to doubt that the movement would ever be fruitful. Yet they never lost their zeal for church cooperation, and being more pragmatic than idealistic , were anxious to see definite manifestations of unity arise among the denominations. Therefore, conscious of an immediate need, and convinced that intermediate steps were necessary, even if organic unity were possible, plans were formulated by the churches and definite methods of cooperation were outlined, leading to "The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America". A brief survey of this movement will be profitable, here, because under its tutelage parishes and denominations have given up their isolation; have ceased to think over-much of their own prerogatives; and have given themselves in a self-effacing

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1. Athearn , Interchurch Government, p. 118.

spirit to the doing together in larger groups, tasks which were imperious - and this is the only spirit out of which organic union could grow.

II. A Milestone in the Road.

A. The Federal Council of Churches.

1. The organization.

This has been called the first attempt to bring the Churches of Christ in America "into a definite and continuing cooperative relationship. It means a formal union of Protestant Churches through the appointment by them of official representatives upon a central body for mutual conference, for coordination of efforts and for united endeavor."[1] It has been further defined as "Some form of mutual concordat between the workers of different Christian communions having for its aim a combination of resources, of activities and of influences in certain spheres of Christian endeavor."[2]

2. The constitution.

The first meeting of the Council was convened in 1908, through the action of twenty-nine cooperating churches, to which in the course of a year four more were added. The constitution of the Council as it was drawn up at that time is as follows:

"1. To express the fellowship and catholic

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1. Churches Allied for Common Tasks. Federal Council, 1921.
2. Referred to "Christianity, its Principles and Possibilities", Association Press, New York, 1920.

unity of the Christian church.

2. To bring the Christian bodies of America into united service to Christ and the world.

3. To encourage devotional fellowship and mutual counsel concerning the spiritual life and religious activities of the churches.

4. To secure a larger combined influence for the Churches of Christ in all matters affecting the moral and social condition of the people, so as to promote the application of the law of Christ in every relation of human life.

5. To assist in the organization of local branches of the Federal Council to promote its aims in their communities."[1]

3. The administration.

The delegates to the Council, appointed by their constituent bodies, meet every four years, or more often if they shall so decide. In the interim, the authority of the Council is exercised through an Executive Committee of one hundred members, meeting annually, which in turn is represented by the Administrative Committee which meets monthly. This committee includes, besides the official representatives of the denominations, certain individuals elected by the Executive Committee and certain corresponding

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1. Macfarland, The Churches of Christ in Council, p. 302.

members representing other organizations.

4. The work.

The work of the Council is carried on by permanent committees known as commissions as well as by temporary committees,[1] and more specifically its function is:

"To study the programme of cooperative tasks, suggesting measures and methods by which tasks can be done effectively; and undertake whatever work properly falls within its sphere.

"To speak with care and a due sense of responsibility for the churches on those matters on which there is general agreement;

"To serve as a clearing house of information about those things that are being done by its constituent bodies and other organizations affiliated or cooperating with it;

"To be an organ of publicity through which that which is of interest to all may be effectively conveyed to each and to the public."[2]

"Its sphere of jurisdiction," says Raymond Calkins, "therefore extends only to those lines of action in which cooperation is possible without compromise of the principles and claims of any communion which is represented in the

1. Note Chapter IV.
2. The Churches Allied for a Common Task, Federal Council, p. 74.

federation. It does not necessitate, even in appearance, any agreement on questions relating to ministry, creed, or polity. It may even presuppose the indefinite prolongations of the present alignment of Christian bodies."[1] The President of the Federal Council, Dean Shailer Mathews, in 1917 said at their annual meeting, "So far as we can forecast the future, there is no indication that American Christianity will be organized along other lines. For my own part, I cannot see how the existence of denominations can close in Protestantism."[2] The Council therefore takes present denominations for granted, and tries to provide a form of practical union for the attainment of practical ends.

The Federation has been justified by its results. The years since its organization in 1908 have been packed full of accomplishments. Thirty of the major denominations have signified their general assent to the principle of cooperation and federation by aligning themselves, thru the commission, in carrying out a definite series of inter-church programs. City federations have been organized in more than fifty major municipalities. State Councils[3] have been organized in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Ohio, California, New York,

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1. Calkins, op. cit., p. 176.
2. Macfarland, The Churches of Christ in Council, p. 58.
3. Athearn, op. cit., p. 210.

Indiana, Michigan, Iowa, South Dakota, and New Jersey. These federations perform a variety of useful tasks. They plan union meetings, call numerous conferences for "denominational disarmament"; make powerful statements with reference to child labor, coal and railway strikes; co-operate in evangelization and religious education; take a united census to discover unchurched populations; and perform cooperative civic service. The significance of having a headquarters that brings the united mind of the church to bear upon these common problems, will escape no one. "Lord Riddell, the distinguished press officer of the British delegation at the Washington Conference, declared in a public gathering: 'Since coming to America, I have been particularly impressed by the work of the churches. This campaign of educational publicity through the Federal Council of the Churches has been one of the most effective pieces of work in behalf of peace that I have seen.' The Federal Council is engaged not in a spasmodic effort , but in a persistent campaign for world accord. It is definitely committed to continued and unremitting activity until a peace-system takes the place of competitive armaments and a recurring war."[1] On the score of achievement, the Federal Council of Churches,

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1. See "Christian Unity at Work", pamphlet issued by the Federal Council.

with scanty resources, and at times with little official support, has made a glorious record since 1908, and with the new achievements by means of radio broadcasting the Federal Council can promise much for the future.

5. The claims.

Yet the principle of Church Federation does not claim "This is all the Church Unity we want, or can have." Nor does it say, "This is Church Unity." It does not really delay church unity in the organic sense, for it more quickly and convincingly opens the eyes of the church to the need and possibility of more compact organization. Its task is to bring the churches together in the prosecution of a common work, wherein they come to a unity of understanding, of sympathy, of goodwill which constitute the spiritual basis of any further unification. In its broader aspects, therefore, the problem is left just where it was before, except for the fact that thru federation a desire, sometimes audibly sometimes inaudibly, has been expressed for a more complete union, giving rise to a movement which is the smaller manifestation of that wider world spirit we have already noted, which is working for organic union. This movement in the United States, because of the failure of the world movement to produce unity between Episcopal and non-Episcopal churches, and further because of the particular denominational problem in our

country, has been confined almost exclusively to amalgamation of separated family groups, and to overtures at times to groups not widely different in tradition and organization. Now we are to proceed to this study, with the background of a world movement, and with a milestone of federation already passed.

III. Church Unity Movements in the United States.

A. The trend.

"Throughout the Christian world," says Dr. Howard Masterman, "a centripetal tendency has begun to appear, resting on the conviction that it is the will of God that His church shall be visibly one."[1] People who have not followed closely the current of church thought and interest are unaware how much headway it has made. The line of movements which have resulted in the amalgamation of church bodies is now long and continues to extend itself. The motto in American seems to be taken from the Oxford Conference: "Not merely to promote but to secure Reunion!" Although many of the obstacles mentioned in a previous chapter,[2] have not been overcome by church federation and various organizations, it is interesting to note the progress that has been made since 1900, and encouraging to make a survey of the many attempts and the few completed unions made by denominations whose tradition is similar ,

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1. Masterman, The Christianity of Tomorrow, p. 195.
2. See Chapter III.

and whose separation is not warranted either on doctrinal, political or economic principles. Perhaps the most outstanding examples of organic unity are found in Canada, where since 1820, nine Presbyterian, eight Methodist, and three Congregational Unions have been formed.[1] These movements culminated in 1925 in the formation of a union between the Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists, to be known as the United Church of Canada, and involved little or no change of doctrine or polity, except as they discarded items that had absolutely no local basis. So with the achievements of the Canadian denominations to blaze the trail, we shall proceed to a study of the organic unity movement in the United States. We shall make the discussion comparative and systematic by noting carefully the progress made in each denomination separately, toward union, and by pointing out the overtures made by the groups to other denominations. In this, mention will be made only of those movements which have appeared since 1900.

B. Achievements.

1. Presbyterian.

The Presbyterians have always been to the forefront in their zeal to promote union, first among their own divided group, and then between their own and other denominations. In 1900 we find that the Presbyterian group is

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1. Slosser, Christian Unity, p. 173.

divided into four distinct parts, the Presbyterian churches of the U.S.A., the United Presbyterian Church, the Southern Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.[1] However, in 1906 the greater part of the Cumberland Presbyterians united with the Presbyterian Church of the United States. The strictures in this denomination have been caused principally by four disagreements - upon slavery, creeds, the secular nature of the constitution, and instrumental music.[2]

In 1910, the year when the Christian Unity spirit seemed to be particularly alive, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. appointed a committee[3] on church cooperation and union. Following this in 1912[4] a meeting was held in Atlanta, Georgia, simultaneously, of the three major bodies of the Presbyterian Church. There were hopes that the ensuing fellowship might result in organic union, but no definite steps were taken.

But of special note is the proposal made in 1918 by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., for "An Organic Union of the Evangelical Churches in America."[5] "It provides that when six denominations shall have certified their assent, a council may

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1. Phillip Schaff, Creeds of Christendom, vol. iii, pp. 809ff.
2. Slosser, Christian Unity, p. 161.
3. Ibid., p. 351.
4. Ibid., p. 303.
5. Brown, The Church in America, p. 260.

be convened to function for what shall be known as the United Church of Christ in America. The plan contemplates a Federal Council with enlarged powers which besides general duties of an advisory and judicial character, shall have power "to direct such consolidation of the missionary activities as well as of particular churches in over-churched areas as is consistent with the law of the land and of the particular denominations affected."[1] This plan was adopted by the Reformed Church in the U.S. at its General Synod in May 1923, and by the Congregational Churches in October 1923, but further than this, little has been done with it since that time. This is considered by many as only an unnecessary substitute for the Federal Council of Churches.

Two other important steps have been taken by the Presbyterian Church, during the past decade. The first was the union of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. with the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church, on a basis of theology, which was effected in 1920. Another more advanced move was that made by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. at its meeting in 1929[2], proposing a merger with other Presbyterian and Reformed bodies, and also a union with the Methodist Episcopal Church; the Methodist Episcopal Church, South,

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1. Christian Unity: Its Principles and Possibilities, p.258.
2. Cavert, "When the Churches Unite", Review of Reviews, July, 1929.

and the Protestant Episcopal Church. However such a union would involve many problems, which must be anticipated and evaluated properly, and would require, it seems, a long period of education before it could be consummated. A united group, such as that proposed would indeed include enough of the Protestant Church membership to be called "The Christian Church of North America". If by some mutual act of comprehension or compromise, these sects did come together, perhaps the organization would soon be considered the national church, and then ahead there would be the peril of its becoming an Established Church. But the first step has not been taken yet, and until that time comes, the divided church will climb wearily the steep hill that leads to ultimate unity, behind which one may see the dawn of a new day in Christianity. We now turn to another great denomination.

2. Methodist.

American Methodism had its beginnings in New York City,[1] when Philip Embury, a Wesleyan local preacher, began to preach. The first American Conference was organized in 1773. Since that time schism after schism has formed, and by 1900 there had been nine splits and five subsequent reunions. But there still remained the two separate branches of Methodism: the Methodist Episcopal

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1. See Buckley, J.M., History of Methodism in the United States.

Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, along with the Methodist Protestants.

Various attempts have been made to bring them together. In 1908 the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, feeling that the time had come to bury dead issues, made overtures to the Methodist Protestants by a delegation which suggested terms and reasons for an organic union. But no definite action was taken, and since then negotiations have been continued, while in the meantime many Methodist Protestants,[1] feeling the attraction of the larger organization and the lethargy of their own, have entered the Methodist Episcopal Church. And we think that organic union is not far distant, as we observe a feeling of earnest longing in the ranks of the Methodist Protestant church, to be counted as a part of the great body from which they severed themselves, because of differences of opinion concerning administration.

But the union which has been longed for consistently since the Civil War, has been that between the Methodist Episcopal Church , and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.[2] Both churches now realize that denominational loyalties and brotherhood are sometimes separated. They divided on slavery, and yet they maintained and even

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1. See Slosser, Christian Unity, p. 168.
2. See Lynch, The Christian Unity Movement in America.

intensified their denominational loyalties. Christian brotherhood means more than loyalty to a traditional or an anti-Christian institution, such as slavery. It means the recognition of the unity of purpose that already exists, and the willingness to transcend petty prejudices in order that "they all may be one". The whole matter did not come to any official appeal until after the World War, when various committees were appointed by both churches.

In 1920 the General Conference of the two communions had the matter of reunion so well advanced, that before the succeeding quadrennium was closed, the various Annual Conferences, were called upon to take action on a specific scheme for re-union. The Methodist Church obtained an almost unanimous decision for union, from its General Conference in 1924 and throughout its Annual Conferences of that year. But when the matter was presented to the Church South, "certain bishops , lesser clergy and laity, who raised the Civil War prejudices with regard to negroes holding membership in the same church with whites, and charged that the Methodist Episcopal Church was a hot-bed of Modernism, succeeded in marshalling a sufficient number of votes in opposition so the necessary two-thirds vote in favor was not obtained."[1] Four years elapsed and then at the General Conference of the Methodist

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1. Slosser, op. cit., p. 169.

Episcopal Church at Kansas City in 1928, almost unanimous action was taken favoring immediate steps for union with the M.E. South, and with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. A very significant action too was the creation of a permanent commission on Federation and Unity, which should negotiate all approaches to unity. These churches are leaders in the United States in matters of reform and cooperation, and it is inevitable that in this mutual spirit of cooperation, they shall gradually grow into an organic union which will help to erase thesectional spirit that sometimes flares up between the North and South.

3. Lutheran.[1]

We are now to deal with an organic union whose story reads almost like a romance. This is the thrilling movement which led to the formation of the United Lutheran Church in 1917. Previous to this date, over one-third of the communicant Lutheran membership in the United States was represented by three churches, The General Synod, The United Synod of the South, and the General Council. Yet, there was a certain spirit of unity persisting thru the three bodies, for when, in 1887, "The Common Service for the Use of Evangelical Lutheran Congregations" was produced it was used not only by the three churches but by

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1. These facts appeared in the Constructive Quarterly, vol. V, September 1917, in an article by Dr. Henry E. Jacobs.

other Lutherans as well.

So, it was in 1893 that the General Synod suggested the mutual appointment of a Commission on Practical Cooperation for Comity in Home Missions. The three churches did this. The practical cooperation agreed upon began to show results for by 1900, in the mission field, the missionaries of South India had founded a "Conference", and later all Lutheran missionaries in India became "The All-Indian Lutheran Conference."

No ground was left untouched in the work for union, and activities such as the Association of their editors, the formation of Social Unions, union meetings of Theological faculties, inter-ministerial meetings and the Lutheran Brotherhood and Luther League, helped to tie the knot more tightly.

Then in celebration of the 400th anniversary[1] of the Reformation, the three churches united in the appointment of a joint Committee in 1916. At a later conference in 1917, thought to be the last for the Committee, a report was brought in from a group of influential laymen, mostly members of the committee on Finance, advising that immediate steps be taken to unite the three churches. By May 1917, definite plans were made and a Constitution was drawn up, which was agreed upon on June

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1. Slosser, op. cit., p. 169.

5th of that year.

At the Convention of the General Synod of the Lutheran Church which met in Chicago on June 22nd, 1927, unanimous action was taken ratifying the Constitution of the United Lutheran Church of America. That step made the union. In the same year 1917, a movement among the Norwegian Lutheran Synods culminated in the union of three churches in what is now the Norwegian Church of America. The Lutherans have then set an example for others to follow, in their dispatch and thoroughness of action, in accomplishing a union.

4. Other denominations.

There is scarcely a major denomination which during the last two decades, has not either made overtures to some other group, or been successful in making a complete union of two or more bodies. The Presbyterians, the Methodists, and the Lutherans have been engaged primarily in getting their own families to have a reunion, before they called visitors in. Some of the estranged children are again together, and are beckoning to their relatives, to come with them to enjoy real fellowship in a larger group. Besides those unions, either in reality or in prospect, which we have mentioned, there are a few others, worthy of our attention.

In 1911, the Baptists showed their participation

in the trend of the age, when the Free Baptist Church, and the Northern Baptist Convention consolidated[1] in another family merger. Then in 1923, the family group represented by the Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical Church merged, after a separation of more than thirty years.[2] The Congregational Church,[3] which we have seen was coming to terms with the Episcopal communion, made a further move when at its General Convention in Detroit in 1929, it voted enthusiastically for union with the Christian Church. When the General Convention of the latter body met in October of 1929, it ratified the proposal, and the union of thesetwo bodies was officially constituted. Another milestone in the road to organic unity was reached by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States, at its meeting in Indianapolis in May of 1929, when it went on record as unanimously in favor of a union with the United Brethren or the Evangelical Synod of North America, or with both, and provided the machinery by which a union should be consummated when the other bodies take similar action. Apparently, these movements, some of which have resulted in organic unions, point to the direction in which our efforts should be expended.

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1. Cavert, "When the Churches Unite", Review of Reviews, July, 1929.
2. Slosser, Christian Unity, p. 168.
3. See Review of Reviews, July 1929, p. 72.

The movement has proceeded far in the United States, and from all indications, the next decade should see organic unions of Protestant denominations, such as already exist in Canada[1] and Australia, as an accomplished task. Now, as we come to the end of this study we see that alone the Church of Rome remains outside of the movement. The position of that Church remains, today, as it always has been. To expect cooperation yet, from that vast body of organized Christianity, would be for the Protestants to return again to the fold of which now they are schismatic members. But this would give us the type of unity that existed before 1520.[2] And as Dr. Raymond Calkins asserts, "None outside Rome wants such unity again."[3] Better diversity as we know it, than uniformity without liberty. Yet, judging from the centripetal tendency[4] in the denominations today, the church of tomorrow will have some form of unified organization, and cooperation between existing denominations more complete and progressive than we have today.

In this discussion, we have tried to proceed logically through the various steps which lead up to and thru organic church unity in its several manifestations. At the end of each chapter we have made sure that we have

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1. Slosser, Christian Unity, pp. 342-351 and 304-313.
2. Ibid., p. 29.
3. Calkins, op. cit., p. 182.
4. See chart at end of this chapter.

proceeded a certain distance, by definite conclusions, and have then looked forward to the next step, cautiously yet hopefully. Now we are drawing to the close of this journey, and in the concluding chapter we shall view a panorama of the road, we have travelled, and then finally turn to ascertain the significance of our measured steps for the church of tomorrow.

But to show graphically how far the movement we have been analyzing and describing has gone, we here present a chronological table of the unity program in the United States from 1900-1930.

IV. Chronology of Church Unity in the United States since 1900.

1901. National Federation of Churches in the U.S.
1902. Missionary Education Movement organized in the U.S.
1904. Fourth World's Sunday School Convention, Jerusalem.
1905. National Federation of Churches in the United States.
1906. The Laymen's Missionary Movement in the U.S.
1906. Part of Cumberland Presbyterian Church unites with the Presbyterian Church of the United States.
1907. Committee on Reference and Counsel, under the direction of the Conference of Foreign Missions Boards and Societies in the U.S. and Canada.
1907. Fifth World Sunday School Convention, Rome, Italy.
1908. The Methodist Episcopal Church makes overtures to the Methodist Protestant Church in the United States.
1908. The Fifth Lambeth Conference.
1908. First National Meeting of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America at Philadelphia.
1908. Connecticut State meeting of Congregational ministers confer with the Episcopalians on basis of the Lambeth Appeal of 1908.
1908. Preliminary meetings leading to the American Congregational Episcopal Concordat.
1910. The Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations in the U.S. organized.
1910. Sixth World's Sunday School Convention, Washington, D.C.
1910. Christian Unity Foundation in the U.S.

1910. World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh.
1910. The Churches of the Disciples of Christ in National Convention at Topeka make important resolutions as to unity.
1910. The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. appointed a permanent committee on Church Cooperation and Union.
1910. The General Convention of the Amer. Prot. Episc. Church issues call for a World Conference on Faith and Order.
1911. Baptist World Alliance meets in Philadelphia.
1911. Union of Northern Baptists and Free Baptists.
1912. Simultaneous meeting of American Presbyterian bodies at Atlanta, hoping to lead to organic union.
1913. Seventh World's Sunday School Convention, Zurich.
1913. The Federation of Women's Boards of Foreign Missions organized in America.
1914. Church Peace Union founded in America.
1914. Outbreak of World War.
1917. United Lutheran Church in America formed by unions.
1917. Norwegian church in America formed by unions.
1918. Presbyterian Church in U.S.A. makes a proposal for the organic union of the Evangelical churches in America.
1919. Attempted concordat between American Episcopal and Congregational Churches.
1920. League of Nations.
1920. Sixth Lambeth Conference.
1920. Important Presbyterian union in U.S.
1920. Fourth International Congregational Council at Boston.
1920. Proposed concordat between Amer. Prot. Episc. Church and the Old Catholic and Easter Orthodox Churches.
1921. World Alliance of the Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System meets at Pittsburgh.
1923. International Federation of Christian Women organized.
1923. Merger of the Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical Church in the U.S.
1924. Meth. Episc. Church in its General Conference almost unanimously passed legislation for union of their church with M.E. Church South in U.S.
1924. Ninth World's Sunday School Convention, Glasgow.
1927. World Conference on Faith and Order held at Lausanne, Switzerland.
1928. Federal Council of Churches holds a very important conference on Comity at Cleveland, Ohio.
1928. Jerusalem meeting of Intern. Missionary Council.
1928. Tenth World's Sunday School Convention, Los Angeles, Cal.
1929. Synods of Reformed Church and United Brethren, and Evangelical Synod adopted resolutions to unite.
1929. Congregational National Council adopts plan to unite with Christian Church.

1929. Southern Presbyterians inaugurate movement to unite with Northern.
1929. General Assembly of Presbyters in U.S.A. voted to undertake a basis for organic union with Prot. Episcopal, the M.E. Church, North and South.
1929. Congregational Church unites with Christian Church.
1930. Significant negotiations by Protestant Episcopal Church with other denominations for immediate steps to secure organic union.

# CHAPTER VI.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

### I. Summary

Tolstoi was the spokesman for many people both good and bad, when he said, "Let us away with the church, for it is a hindrance to piety." Yet we are certain that he failed to see the power and importance of religion as a corporate life. Down through the ages the organized church has marched, spreading its gospel. It has done its work, at times under handicaps. One of these have been the schisms of which there have been principally three.

The Protestant Revolution, led by Luther and Calvin, as a revolt against the infallible authority and uniformity of the Catholic Church, was the birthplace of denominationalism. Individualism was apparently the ground in which this variety of Christian organization grew, but soon the various denominations became slaves to their opinions, and the various bodies began to build their sectarian walls and develop a spirit of antipathy.

Many leaders such as Cranmer, Bousset, and Milton have revolted against this in history, and today

the man in the street, as well as leaders in every field, John D. Rockefeller, W.E.Orchard and Professor L.P. Jacks among the many, are rebelling against it. They see the disunited Church both in organization and spirit, in a world where nations, states, towns, schools and business organizations are cooperating. The church has had a definite task to do, but because of the lack of cooperation and powerful influence as a united voice, it has been limited in its service. Today unity should be considered as a possible solution to the church's problem of weakness to ennable her better to fight against organized morality, to promote peace more effectively, and to convince the outside world that she is sincere in her efforts to offer economic amelioriation, to christianize the state, and to promote peace among nations. The church most certainly needs a reorganization to eliminate waste of resources, when this is so perilous today. Yet, above all, there should be church unity, because that represents best the mind and body of Christ on earth.

We should not, however, speak too glibly of Church Unity, particularly of the organic type,because there are many obstacles in the way of such a movement. People who talk about it do not know which direction to take, and therefore are slow to devise a process to attain any goal. They are not certain whom they want to

unite, or what kind of unity they are seeking. Then, there are certain dogmas and theories, such as those pertaining to the nature of the sacraments, the ministry of the church, which estrange the groups. This tradition might be comprehended more mutually, however, if it were not for the fact that the denominations fail to distinguish between the essentials and non-essentials of faith and doctrine. They should not compromise, but they should transcend and comprehend. However, the denominations are taught to keep apart, and the spirit of sectarianism is engendered by denominational propoganda, which is spread by denominational church history, or denominational voices such as the college, seminary, or paper. Peter Ainslie suggests that church history be rewritten, while others insist that Church colleges become less distinctly denominational, and that church papers become inter-denominational organs. But denominational exclusiveness is the chief obstacle, as it manifests itself in the closed communion and closed ordination, and in exclusive baptismal rites. However, much is being done today, to remove these obstacles, which seem almost impervious.

The churches are getting closer together. The influence of the personalistic philosophies and religious

psychologies is inestimable. Knowledge is being disseminated, and a zeal to carry this modern gift to foreign lands, and into the bypaths of our own country, has motivated closer cooperation among missionaries. Organic unity in the mission field is very common. Missionary conferences such as the Ecumenical of 1900 the Edinburgh in 1910, the Kikuya of 1913 and the Jerusalem of 1928 have wrought their directing influence upon the movement, not only in the foreign field but at home. The unity achievements in the foreign field are examples both as to goal and method, for the movement here. The magnetism of a common task has also attracted mission groups together in the United States. All of this inevitably has an indirect influence upon the church as a whole, in the direction of visible unity. Yet other auxillary influences are found in the various interdenominational organizations such as the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, the American Student Volunteer Movement, the Salvation Army, and the Temperance Associations. Still another cause of further unity, which is also an effect of the spirit of the modern church is the Interdenominational Administration Bureaus which have transformed the work of the church into a partition of labor, in the

accomplishment of which many representative denominations cooperate. All of these movements create a sympathy and better understanding of the separate bodies for each other. Their influence has not been in vain. It is seen in the Organic Unity Movement.

There have been many direct steps toward organic union during the period of 1900-1930. Many conferences have been held to promote union, the most outstanding being those sponsored by the Episcopalians, including the Lambeth of 1888 with its quadrilateral the Lambeth of 1920 with its concordat, and the Lausanne of 1927 with its call to unity. The fruits of these conferences have been significant in promoting a better understanding between Episcopal and non-Episcopal churches. As a practical application of the idealism shown in the conferences attempts have been made to secure u union among other denominations.

A milestone on the way toward organic unitty has been the Federal Council of Churches formed in 1908. It is not a substitute for organic union, but is a plan for cooperation of denominations as they are, in a mutual task. It is merely a stepping-stone.

The desire for organic unity still persists through the century. Visible organic unity has been

realized in the United Churches of Canada, involving the Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists. In the United States some Presbyterians have united, and have made overtures recently to other groups. The Methodists have expressed their desire to unite with the Presbyterians, and the separated groups of their own family the Methodist Protestant and the Methodist Episcopal South. The United Lutheran Church has already been formed, and the Evangelical Church today is theresult of a merger. Other negotiations are under way, and will end soon not only in the union of family groups but of distinct denominations, as was the precedent set by the Congregational and Christian Churches in 1929. The movement has as its purpose organic unity.

II. Conclusions.

We are now prepared to draw definite conclusions con erning the church of tomorrow, based upon our study of the movement up to the present.

1. The United Church of tomorrow must make room for the fullest liberty. As we have pointed out there are centrifugal as well as centripetal influences and both must be accomodated. Historical processes cannot be reversed. It was through lack of liberty that we have

our present denominations. Unity cannot mean uniformity, when it is applied to churches.

2. A united church must provide for the widest diversity in types of worship, religious experience and methods of work. Bishop McConnell says,(1) "If I am at hand when the day of the United Church comes, I hope that church will be such that I can be a Quaker in some moods, sitting silent to await the stirrings of the spirit, and a ritualist in other moods, entering into a subtle communion with the souls of the past, and a crusader rejoicing in the Christian conquest in other moods still, listening to stories of gains in great cities or in far-away mission fields." Since all these types of experience are valid, and no one is in all parts superior to the others, the church of the future must provide for adequate expression of these varieties of religious experience, in an organic group.

3. A united Church must be based upon a common purpose and transcendent ideals, more than upon intellectual agreement. The early church had dogma, but for a while it was united not by thescriptures and articles of faith, but by loyalty to a common ideal and a sense of unity which the world forced upon them. The attempt today to secure agreements concerning essential doctrines, is

1. McConnell - Living Together, p 61.

retarding organic unity, and the time must come when Christians in their desire for Christian fellowship one with another shall become conscious of a oneness of aim and spirit of service, which is the direct road to vital union. What a man believes is important, but the creed which all Christians live by is more important.

4. We must get family fgroups together before any wider organic union can be formed. As the church federation plan was an almost necessary antecedent of the present movement, so the efforts to secure organic unity among family groups and their resultant mergers, are transitional prerequisites of any subsequent more inclusive ecclesiastical organization. The foundation was placed deep in solid rock at the beginning of the twentieth century, the structure assumed at the beginning of the third decade definite form, and now it begins to tower above us in all its grandeur, and we begin to realize what a symmetry the finished spire will present; --- this is the development of the church for tomorrow.

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This is the most comprehensive historical study and collection of data I have ever seen upon this subject. It is used throughout the disquisition as a sourcebook for historical data. The entire book has been studied intensively.